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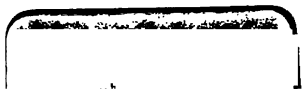
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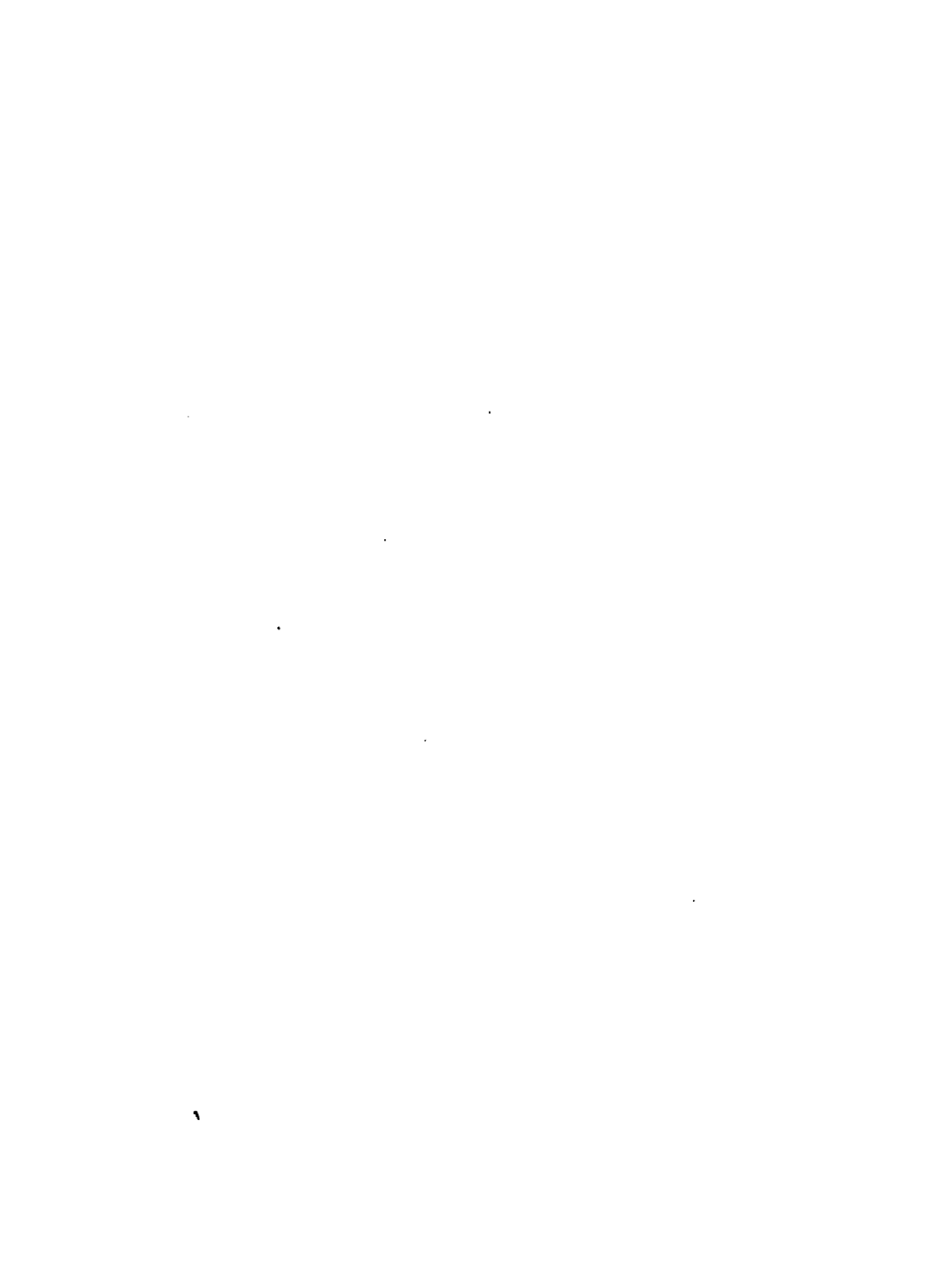
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MINISTER'S

BY R. B. GILBERT







THE MINISTERS' DIRECTORY.

EDINBURGH :
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORK.

THE
MINISTERS' DIRECTORY;

OR,

FORMS FOR THE VARIOUS DUTIES OF THE
HOLY MINISTRY,

ACCORDING TO

THE PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

BY

THE REV. JAMES ANDERSON,

MINISTER OF THE PARISH OF CULTS,

• AUTHOR OF "LIGHT IN DARKNESS; OR, COMFORT TO THE SICK AND AFFLICTED,"
ETC. ETC. ETC.

SECOND EDITION, CAREFULLY CORRECTED, WITH ADDITIONS.

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DEDICATED BY PERMISSION
TO THE
RIGHT HON. LORD BELHAVEN AND STENTON,
LORD HIGH COMMISSIONER
TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

MY LORD,—It was suggested to me that a Directory containing Forms for the performance of the various duties of the holy ministry was much needed, and that such a work was indispensable to young men either entering on the office of a clergyman, or even for students preparatory thereto.

In the Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Public Worship of God, there is a course laid down in relation to most of the duties belonging to the official position of a minister ; but, besides being told what he is to do, some examples, shewing him how he is to do it, are obviously desirable. It was with the view of supplying this defect, so long complained of, that I have prepared "The Ministers' Directory."

My Lord, I cannot but regard as a special favour the permission so readily granted to dedicate the new edition of "The Ministers' Directory" to your Grace ;—a nobleman whose personal virtues give a lustre to his rank and ancient lineage,—a nobleman who has long been an elder of the

Church of Scotland, and one who has all along taken a deep interest in its prosperity, and conferred upon it many distinguished and valuable favours.

All these considerations combined, lead me to hope that "The Ministers' Directory," under the patronage of your Grace, may be acceptable to those for whom it is intended.

That your Grace may be blessed with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus, is the earnest prayer of,

MY LORD,

Your Grace's most obedient, humble Servant,

JAMES ANDERSON.

PREFACE.

THE favourable reception with which the "Ministers' Directory" has been received, has induced the author to prepare a Second Edition with considerable additions. This was suggested to him from various quarters by distinguished men, both lay and clerical, on whose opinions he could place the most implicit confidence.

Every effort has been made, and every available information taken advantage of, whereby to render the work as complete as possible.

"Let all things be done decently and in order," says the apostle. "Let every one do what is right in his own eyes," says the Church, to all intents and purposes, for our clergymen are really without any guide in discharging the important duties of their office. There can be no doubt that it is very unsatisfactory for a Church to be in this state. The time is come when it is absolutely necessary to have some suitable forms as a guide to ministers in improving the taste and order of the public services of religion. This is ac-

known to be the case, less or more, by Protestant ministers of all denominations.

If we look at nature around us, we see that order and beauty characterise all the works of God. "He hath made everything beautiful in his time." He loves the beautiful, and it is therefore agreeable to Him that the services of His house be all gone through in a suitable and reverent manner.

The author humbly commits his work to Him whose glory it is designed to promote, and to whom all the good it may accomplish, if it should accomplish any, is exclusively due.

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MINISTERS' DIRECTORY.

PAROCHIAL VISITING.

MINISTERS in the discharge of the important duties of their office are required to visit their flocks, and to converse with them in their own houses. On such occasions they should address them on topics suitable to their state and circumstances, and pray with and for them. This may be done in some such way as the following :—

Let us pray—

Most merciful Lord God, how great is thy goodness to the sinful sons of men ! We humble ourselves before thee at this time with holy fear and love. We acknowledge thy goodness to us, and supplicate thy mercy and forgiveness. Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, gracious, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth. Glorious, O Lord, are the operations of thy hands, and wonderful are the designs of thy love and the counsels of thy wisdom. Thou art nigh unto all them that call upon

thee, to all that call upon thee in truth. Thou wilt fulfil the desire of them that fear thee ; thou also wilt hear their cry, and wilt save them.

We, O Lord, would approach thy throne of grace in the name of thy beloved Son. Through him we are encouraged to trust in thee. Adored be thy name for the gift of thy Son, and for delivering him for our offences. Herein is love. Thou didst give him to be a propitiation for our sins. We cast ourselves on thy mercy in Christ Jesus ; we put our trust in his atonement. Thou art in Christ, and art alone accessible by him.

Have compassion on us, O Lord, and help us. We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. Make us deeply penitent and humbled for our sins. Send down upon us thy Holy Spirit ; may he convince us of sin ; may he illuminate and quicken us ; may he teach us to pray ; may he melt us into repentance. Then only shall we truly pray and repent ; then only shall we believe with our hearts unto righteousness. Let us feel that we are the sick who need the Physician. Let us feel that we are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. Our only hope is that Christ has died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Only can his precious blood reach our case, and cleanse us from all sin. Though we see him not, yet believing in him, may we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Keep us, O Lord, we pray thee, amidst the temptations to which we are daily exposed. Make us sensible of our own weakness, that our hearts may be raised to thee for needful supplies of strength. Blessed be thy name, O God, for all the means which thou hast provided that we might be led to the knowledge of thy great love. We

pray that we may be enabled to improve them aright for thy glory and the good of our souls. How great and precious, O Lord, are thy promises to thy people, and how valuable are the blessings which thou art ready to bestow upon them. May those now assembled before thee share in thy blessings, and have a saving interest in thy promises. Oh grant to their souls the living bread which comes down from heaven, and dispose them to hunger and thirst after righteousness. May they live by the faith of the Son of God, and out of his fulness may they receive, and grace for grace. Should any of them be living without God and without hope in the world, we pray that they may be convinced of their guilt and folly, and be impressed with their danger; and do thou lead them to that Saviour who of God is made to us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Assist us, gracious God, in the performance of all our duties. May we speak thy word faithfully, and in the spirit of love, and do thou accompany it with power to the hearts of those now before thee, that it may convince them of sin, strengthen them in their duty, and guide them to life everlasting. Hear, O Lord, these our prayers, and do thou answer them in mercy for Christ's sake. Amen.

My friends, you are a part of that flock of which the Holy Ghost has given me the oversight. I come to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose servant I am, to beseech you in his name to come unto him that ye may have life. However little attention may be paid to the message we bring, the tidings which we announce are infinitely the most important that ever were communicated to the human race.

We come to you announcing the tidings of salvation,

proclaiming to you that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses.

You have all been admitted into the Christian Church by baptism. That rite visibly represents to us the guilty and polluted state in which we come into this world. It shews us that we need to be washed and purified by the blood of Christ before we can be received into favour and acceptance with God. But, although you have been baptized in the name of Christ, and thus admitted within the pale of the visible church, and although many of you have renewed your baptismal engagements at the table of the Lord, I fear that you do not (or, it is possible that you may not) bear upon your minds an habitual and an abiding sense of the inestimable privilege which you thus enjoy, and of the holy character which you are thus bound to maintain. Looking at the general conduct of many who call themselves Christians, we would be led to suppose that they had thrown off their allegiance to Christ, and all the restraints which his religion imposes. How little do we see of that holy walk, how little do we hear of that holy conversation which ought to distinguish the disciples of Christ. While we observe men troubled and cumbered about many things, we lament to see them neglecting the one thing needful.

By your baptismal engagements you become bound to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, to observe all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, to do them. Were you to fulfil those engagements, you should just be living as the disciples of Christ are required to live, you should just be using those means of grace which God has promised to bless for promoting your present peace and everlasting happiness.

If God has been graciously and mercifully pleased to give salvation to his people after they had offended him

and forfeited his favour, he surely has a right to say in what way they shall receive this salvation. Accordingly he has done so. He has explained to us in his Word the method in which alone he will confer it; that it is through faith in his son Jesus Christ.

God is a being of infinite holiness and purity; he could not therefore look upon sin but with abhorrence, nor could he, consistently with his justice, pardon it unless expiation was made for it—unless the punishment which he had denounced was inflicted upon one who, being himself infinite, could give satisfaction to infinite justice. Accordingly in the fulness of time he sent his own Son into the world, who was God as well as man, that he might in man's room and stead bear that punishment which sin had deserved and justice demanded, and which no other could have borne.

Christ is our surety, our substitute. God has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He bore our sins, or the punishment which was due for our sins, in his own body upon the cross. He did all that God required, to enable him, consistently with his justice, to pardon sin and save a ruined world; and God, now through his Word and through his ministers, is proclaiming himself to be in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses.

Through Christ peace has been proclaimed upon earth, and goodwill to the children of men. We are now commissioned to give the fullest and the freest offer of salvation to all who will accept of it. Whosoever believes, repents, and obeys the gospel, shall assuredly be saved. "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." The great consideration with you, therefore, should be to ascertain whether you have a true faith in

Christ—whether you receive with humility and thankfulness all that the Scripture declares concerning Christ, what he was, what he did, and what he suffered—whether you have been enabled through grace, feeling your own helplessness, to throw yourselves entirely on him, trusting in his merits as the sole ground of your justification in the sight of God. Let me beseech you, then, individually, to examine yourselves as to whether you have this faith or not ; and rest not satisfied till you are upon good evidence assured that the love of God prevails in your hearts, for faith worketh by love ; and our Saviour gives us a test by which we may try the sincerity of our love to God, which is the effect of faith. He says, “This is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments.”

You know individually, therefore, whether it be your desire, your wish, and your study, to do the will of God, to keep his commandments, and to avoid everything that you know to be offensive to him ; if such be the case with you I may pronounce you blessed, you will be happy in time whatever may be your outward lot or condition, and you will be happy throughout eternity—your whole path will be like that “of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

If any of you, however, feel that you have not that love to God which exhibits itself by obedience to his laws, and which is the evidence of faith of your union with Christ, and of the renewal of your nature, to you I would with more peculiar earnestness address myself. Your condition is one that requires the utmost attention. You are yet in a state of alienation from God ; you are yet in a state of nature, and not in a state of grace. But you are the persons to whom we are particularly sent, and to whom our message is particularly addressed, for we are sent to call sinners to repentance.

We now pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.

What is it that has kept you from embracing Christ and his salvation as offered to you in the gospel? Here is the question that you should put to yourselves, and endeavour to return the true answer. Is it the world, or the things of the world, that are engrossing your thoughts and your affections, and leading you to neglect this great salvation? Or is there some favourite sin which you delight in the indulgence of, and which you will not lay aside for Christ's sake? Whatever it be that is holding you in bondage, I entreat of you to lay it aside, and now come unto Christ, and you shall find peace and rest for your souls.

But you may, perhaps, be ready to say, How shall I come? How shall I be made a partaker of that redemption which Christ has purchased? I answer, Come unto Christ in the ordinances of his own appointment; and if you wish to know what those ordinances are, I refer you to your Catechisms for the answer:—"The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the Word, sacraments, and prayer, all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation."

The first that is mentioned is the Word. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit. It is that instrument which he commonly makes use of for bringing conviction to the soul, for awakening men to a sense of their guilt and danger, and thus of leading them to flee unto Christ for mercy. Let me entreat you, therefore, to be much employed in reading God's Word, in private and in your families; and when you read it, pray to God that he may open your eyes to see the wondrous things out of his law; that he may seal instruction upon your hearts;

that his Word may be as "a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path."

You must also attend upon the preaching of the gospel, and wait upon God in his own sanctuary. God has promised where two or three are assembled together in his name, to be present in the midst of them to bless them. "He loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob." In all ages of the Christian Church it has chiefly been by the preaching of God's Word that men have been brought to the knowledge and obedience of the truth; and, accordingly, we observe that those who are God's people, never, without strong reason, absent themselves from his house of prayer. Many careless persons attend public worship who go there without any right feeling of the duty and obligation of public worship, and of the benefit that is to be derived from it. But God's people are all there when they are able. They feel the public ordinances of God's worship to be the wells of salvation, to be the fountains of grace where their spiritual life is refreshed and invigorated, and, with the Psalmist, they are ready to cry out, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts! our souls long, yea, even faint for thy courts."

The sacraments of Christ, which are Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are also means of grace which ought never to be neglected.

Baptism is generally administered to children in their infancy, and I fear the privilege thus enjoyed by professing Christians is but little valued, and the obligations and responsibilities then incurred but little thought of. You should ever bear in mind that in this ordinance you are solemnly dedicated and given up to Christ, and are thereby bound to live no longer to yourselves, but to him who died for you and rose again. I entreat you to make

it your study and your prayer, that you may prove yourselves "a holy generation, a peculiar people."

There is another ordinance—the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which Jesus instituted on that night in which he was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and which he commanded his disciples to observe in remembrance of him. Surely no one who has any love for Jesus, or any regard for his salvation, will neglect this dying injunction or request of his Lord. It has always been esteemed the highest privilege by Christ's disciples to be admitted to this ordinance. Here they are allowed to hold the closest and most intimate communion with him, they by faith feed upon him, and become one with him, and he with them, and are made to partake of all his benefits, to their spiritual improvement and growth in grace.

Prayer is the last of these ordinances or means of grace which we are required to use. Prayer is the life of devotion. It is the food of the soul. It is the very element in which the renewed soul lives. It is the first thing that was remarked of Paul after his conversion—"Behold, he prayeth!" It is as impossible for a renewed soul to live without prayer, as for a natural man to live without food. Indeed, you may judge in some measure of your spiritual condition from the delight you have in, or the aversion you feel towards, this duty. If you feel that you are in your element when you are engaged in prayer to God, and keeping up a communication betwixt earth and heaven through Jesus Christ, it is a true proof that a work of grace is going on in you; that "the Spirit of God is dwelling in you;" and you know that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

But if you feel that you have no delight in this divine

exercise, that you can allow days, nay, weeks, to pass without seriously engaging in prayer, it is a sure proof that you are still in a state of spiritual death ; that you are dead in trespasses and sins ; and if you live and die in this state, you must perish. Let me beseech you who are living in the neglect of this duty immediately to begin it. God has promised to be found of them who seek him. He has told us to "ask and it shall be given us, to seek and we shall find, to knock and it shall be opened unto us."

Have stated times, therefore, for prayer. Begin and end the day with prayer. Then retire into your closets and pray to your Father who heareth in secret, and he will reward you openly. Have, if possible, a particular place for prayer—a place which is your Bethel, where you wrestle with God, like Jacob, resolving not to leave him till he bless you. And you, who are heads of families, I trust you all keep up the worship of God in your houses. If any of you have hitherto neglected this duty, let me entreat you to do so no longer. You have no reason to expect that the blessing of God will rest upon you and yours if you never implore it. But if you seek spiritual blessings upon your families for Christ's sake, they will assuredly be bestowed.

Consider, you that are parents, what a portion you deprive your families of if you neglect to pray for them. And what misery you may be the means of entailing upon them by your evil example, and your culpable neglect.

We see parents sometimes lamenting over the bad conduct of their children, when they never implored of God to give them grace and strength to perform duty and resist temptation. Do think seriously of these things, and set about reforming your conduct.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment, with promise." They are your guides and counsellors. Let me beseech you, then, to shew, by your behaviour, that you duly appreciate the parental care under which you live. Attend to the instructions given to you for your temporal and eternal good, and cease not to pray that this end may be accomplished.

In regard to masters, the apostle Paul, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, lays down the principle, that every duty imposed upon an inferior towards a superior, every service rendered to him, implies a corresponding obligation on his part. "None of us liveth to himself." None are exempt from the great and universal law of doing to others as we would that others should do unto us. Let your dealings, as master, be guided by the same principles as should actuate your servant in his dealings towards you.

What need is there, then, of Divine grace for the right discharge of the every-day duties of common life. Many there are who think themselves exemplary in these several relations, who yet have never even thought of doing all to the glory of God in them. God alone can give you that grace which is needful to the right management of all your concerns, and the right fulfilment of every relative duty.

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but with singleness of heart, fearing God; and whatsoever ye do, do it heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Ever keep in mind that you are dying creatures—that the present day is hastening on your last hour—and you

have an eternity before you either of perfect bliss or perfect misery, and your happiness or misery hereafter depends upon your embracing or neglecting the means of grace which are held out to you here. May the Spirit of God apply every word that has been spoken rightly to all your hearts, and bless you with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. Amen.

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou art the fountain of blessedness, the Father of lights, from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. It is our high privilege to come before thee through Jesus Christ, and may we find mercy and acceptance. In every situation in life in which we may be placed, may we, O Lord, remember that the chief object which we should keep in view is to promote thy glory—that thou art ever present with us—that thou still upholdest us by thy bounty—that thou hast redeemed us by thy grace—and that, therefore, thou hast the most unquestionable right to our service.

We would bless thy name, O Lord, for those peculiar, for those inestimable blessings which thou hast bestowed on us, the sinful children of men, by Jesus Christ, thy Son. We bless thee that he came to save the lost. Through faith in his blood, let our sins be pardoned; sanctify us by thy Spirit, that we may bear his image, and fill us with comfort, that our spirits may rejoice in God our salvation. Oh, manifest the exceeding greatness of thy power, and the exceeding riches of thy grace, in bestowing on us such blessings, in making us all that we should be, and in enabling us to do whatever thou requirest of us.

In an especial manner we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless all who are now before thee. Bless them

in their different spheres and occupations. Let them not be drawn away with the wicked, nor with the workers of iniquity. May they testify that they love thee, by keeping thy Word. May they receive the truth in the love of it, that they may be saved. Remember them with the love which thou bearest to thy chosen.

Bless the heads of families. May they shew all diligence in their duties, and all fidelity in their trust. Teach and enable them to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let it be the joy of their hearts to see them walking in the truth, and setting their faces heavenward. Bless their children. Preserve them from sin and from the follies of youth. Give them grace to obey their parents, preserve them in thy favour, and teach them by thy Spirit. May they value religious instruction, and do thou open their hearts to attend to the things which are spoken to them.

We pray, O Lord, that masters may be a blessing to their servants, by their kindness, by giving them religious instruction, and watching over their moral conduct. And may servants conscientiously perform their duties—not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. May they all serve thee in righteousness and in holiness all the days of their life. And do thou, O Lord, grant that in all the afflictions and privations with which thou hast been pleased to visit any in thy presence, they may discern and acknowledge thy Fatherly wisdom and goodness. Supply all their wants, and fulfil all their desires, in such a manner as thy wisdom sees best, for thy own mercy's sake in Christ Jesus.

And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

FORM II.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we would approach the footstool of thy throne, and offer up the gratitude of our hearts unto thee for the distinguished privileges which we enjoy ! We bless thee for that abundant revelation of thy will which thou hast given unto us in the Scriptures of truth. We bless thee that thou not only didst speak at sundry times and in divers manners to the fathers by the prophets, but that thou hast also in these last days spoken unto us by thy Son. We bless thee that, in that revelation which thou hast given us, thou hast not only furnished us with the most pure and the most perfect precepts, the most sublime and heavenly doctrines, but also with the fullest illustrations of that love and care which thou hast for thine own people, and the most awful examples of that vengeance which thou pourest forth upon thine enemies.

May we, O Lord, study thy Word with the most serious attention ; may we make its precepts the rule of our conduct, its doctrines the object of our faith ; and may we view the examples, whether of mercy or of severity, towards others which it contains as ensamples unto ourselves ; and may we view them as written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the earth have come. May those choice blessings which thou hast bestowed upon thy faithful followers, encourage us to walk in thy ways and to keep thy commandments ; and may those judgments with which thou visitest thine enemies serve as warnings to us, and, by thy blessing, may they lead us to turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon us, and unto our God, and he will abundantly pardon.

We feel, however, O Lord, that neither the encouragements nor the threatenings of thy Word make that impression upon our hearts which they ought to produce. Assist us, therefore, in all our attempts to serve thee, and let thy Word be sanctified to us. Let none of us fail of the grace of God. Guide us, defend us, and supply our wants. We are safe, O Lord, if thou protect us. Be present with us at this time, and bless us. Hear and accept of us for the merits of our Redeemer, who is God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

In addressing you on the present occasion, I propose to bring before you the channels through which God conveys spiritual light into the mind, and spiritual vigour into the heart. He hath prepared a variety of channels in which the water of life may flow : these are the ordinances of his grace ; and these are, in particular, the hearing of the Word preached, attendance upon public worship, the partaking of the sacraments, and especially fervent and daily prayer.

Men are very apt to run into two very opposite errors with respect to the means of grace and salvation which God hath appointed. Some make all their religion consist in the mere external observance of these means. They attend church, they hear sermons, they receive the sacraments, they pray to God morning and evening : this is all their religion ; they are satisfied with it, and think themselves in a safe way to heaven. It is true this is so far well, and even more than many do for the salvation of their souls, but it is far from being enough. Attendance on these ordinances is not, properly speaking, religion, but only the appointed way of acquiring religion, which consists in holy and devout affections of heart, and in godliness of

life and conversation. Without faith and love to God and man, and good works springing from these principles, there can be no true religion. Everything short of this is only a phantom of it, which may indeed impose upon men who judge only by outward appearances, but not upon God, who seeth into all the foldings of the human heart.

But there are others who look upon the use of means as unnecessary. They have no need of the sacraments, nor of the preaching of the Word; and, if we believe them, prayer consists only in thanking God for his benefits. This is a most dangerous sort of impiety, directly contrary to Scripture, the end of religion, and utterly subversive of all morality.

To find God, you must seek him in the ways of his own appointment, in the observance of those ordinances which he hath promised to bless, and which he renders effectual by the operation of his Spirit for the conversion of sinners, and for the edification and comfort of saints.

You must, therefore, be assiduous in seeking God in the public ordinances of religion. There he hath promised to be found of them that seek him; there he hath been wont to give eminent displays of his power and glory.

Some imagine that they may improve their time as usefully, and seek God as successfully, in their private dwellings as in public-worshipping assemblies; but these, it is well known, are with many the flimsy excuses which they allege, and with which they satisfy themselves for neglecting the public ordinances of God's house; and it will be found true in general, that they who hold this language, are the most remiss in all the exercises of devotion.

To hear the Word of God preached, is not the sole end of public worship,—a main object of it is to unite your

hearts in prayer and thanksgiving to God, and to celebrate his name in songs of praise.

Though you had more extensive and accurate knowledge of religion than your teachers, yet it is your duty to attend on their ministrations. Our Lord far exceeded in knowledge those who officiated in the Jewish synagogue, and yet he was regular in his attendance there ; for he knew that by doing so he glorified his Father in heaven.

Beyond all doubt, God is to be sought in private and in secret ; and they are Christians in name only, and nothing more, who constantly neglect those bounden and sanctifying duties ; but they were never intended to render public and social worship unnecessary.

You cannot be true Christians while you despise or habitually neglect any of God's positive institutions, and he hath expressly commanded you not to neglect the assembling of yourselves together for his worship and service. "The Lord hath assured us that he loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. The seed of Jacob called upon his name in their respective families, and he watched over them for good ; but he seems to have delighted more in the gates of Zion,—that is, in social-worshipping assemblies of his people,—because he received greatest honour by the more public service paid him there."

However lightly thoughtless men may esteem public ordinances, God often honours them, though administered in much weakness, by making them effectual means of grace and salvation. You ought not to look so much to the dispensers of them as to the promises and blessing of God. "I was with you in weakness," says the apostle Paul, "and in fear, and in much trembling, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

In public assemblies, God gives effect and energy to his word ; he renders it " quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow." As it was when the apostles were assembled on the day of Pentecost that God sent his Holy Spirit from heaven to enlighten, and sanctify, and strengthen them ; so is it still when devout Christians publicly assemble themselves in his presence to worship him ; the Divine Spirit descends upon them to animate and bestow upon them the most excellent gifts. This is a powerful motive to draw those together who love God, and who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

If, therefore, you would find God, and partake in the blessings of his grace, you must seek him not only in private and in secret, but in the public assemblies of his people, where he is present in a peculiar manner, communicating the most precious gifts to his faithful servants.

If you sincerely wish to find God, you must seek him in faith ; not only believing that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him, but that he is in Christ a compassionate and reconciled Father.

If you warrantably hope to find God, you must seek him in a way of repentance and holiness of life. He requires you to seek him in his ordinances by faith in Christ, by repentance and amendment of life ; these are the most hopeful and warrantable ways of seeking God. Be prevailed upon, then, to seek the Lord in this the day of your merciful visitation. Let none of you say, what presses you to this duty ? Everything presses you,—God, who requires it,—the infliction of temporal chastisements,—the dread of eternal justice,—grief for having long offended God,—shame for your ingratitude,—many days and years wasted to no valuable purpose,—the difficulty

of repentance,—approaching death and judgment, and your own everlasting interest,—all loudly call upon you to seek the Lord while he is to be found. Be wise to-day ; it is madness to defer a business the most important that is given you to mind upon earth till the most inconvenient season. Present your prayer before God, and say unto him, “ Draw me, and I will run after thee.”

Do then, my friends, one and all of you, old and young, parents and children, masters and servants, make a surrender of yourselves to God. You should begin to-day, and continue to be earnest and diligent for the time to come, as you have been cold and negligent in time past, and then you may humbly hope to find God on earth, and to enjoy his immediate presence in heaven through all the ages of eternity. Amen.

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou art holy, and none but those whom thou makest holy can stand before thee. There is none holy as thou art, for thou alone art perfect in holiness.

How, then, O God, can we stand before thee? We are not worthy to appear in thy presence. Sin has separated between thee and us. If thou hadst not, in thy mercy, provided a ransom for our souls in the sacrifice of Christ, we must have perished for ever.

O our God, for this provision of grace our souls do bless and magnify thy holy name. In it alone do we look and seek for pardon and peace for our guilty spirits, for nothing else can cleanse us from our sins, and save us in the day of thy wrath. We have nothing that we can offer as a ransom for our souls. There is no sure refuge to which we can flee but the sufficiency of the Saviour, the Lord our righteousness. Pardon our iniquity, for it is very great. May the blood of Jesus

Christ, thy Son, cleanse us from all sin, and sprinkle our hearts from an evil conscience. May all who are walking in the ways of the world, and acting on wrong views of life and duty, be reclaimed from their errors, and be made to see and feel that their own welfare, and the welfare of others, can only be promoted by living unto Christ, and not unto themselves. Give, then, in thy mercy, the Spirit of pure and fervent devotion, to check all evil inclinations in their hearts, and all outward temptations to iniquity, and to make them faithful in the performance of all the duties of their station.

May all who are living under the power of godliness be enabled so to act as to shew that the only sure way to promote the true interests of society is to cultivate continually the spirit of pure and undefiled religion in the soul. By abstaining from all sin, and abounding in all well-doing, may they be seen to be what thou, in thy grace, hast indeed made them, the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

O blessed God, may the power of thy Spirit subdue all the evil affections of our minds, and sanctify our souls with the knowledge, and love, and practice of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

We pray, O Lord, that the services in which we have at this time been engaged, may have a sanctifying impression on our minds. Under the trials with which we may be visited, may the consolations of the truths we have been hearing sustain and delight our souls. When pressed by temptation, may we remember the warnings of thy Word, and fear to offend; when burdened by a sense of infirmity and weakness, may we remember the promise of thy grace, and be encouraged to run with patience the race that is set before us.

Be very gracious to all in thy presence. Enrich them

with thy grace. Let not their footsteps slide. Let not mercy and truth forsake them ; but let integrity and uprightness preserve and direct them.


Look with compassion on the sick and afflicted : supply the wants of the poor : hear the cry of the oppressed : have pity on the captive and the prisoner : and visit with the reviving consolations of thy grace all such as are appointed to death.

We ask every mercy in the name, and for the sake, of our Lord Jesus Christ. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

MARRIAGE SERVICE.

MARRIAGE, as the most important of all connexions, was divinely intended to be also the most permanent. If our first parents had not sinned, it would have even been as imperishable as themselves. If marriage be a religious bond, why should it not be made the subject of a religious form? Why should not a sacred connexion, which probably shapes the whole future course of life, which creates new duties, and which imposes new responsibilities to God and man, be marked by the solemnities of that religion through which alone the virtues of our mortal state can be sustained?

There can be but two kinds of obligation in marriage—the civil contract, and the religious contract. The former binding so long as the law can bind, but necessarily expiring with the law. The latter binding while life continues. To which of those contracts marriage actually belongs the Christian can have no rational doubt whatever. Its divine obligation might be proved even from the nature of its objects; for, unless it were indissoluble, it would be wholly inadequate to the preservation of mental purity and domestic peace, to the protection of woman, and to the education of children; and to be indissoluble, it must be divine. But we have



the most authoritative of all evidence in the testimony of our Lord—"Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

"In all cases of regular marriages, when the certificates of the proclamation of the banns are given out, such certificates shall be accompanied by a copy of the schedule (C) to which the Marriage Act refers ; and upon the solemnisation of the marriage, such schedule, having all the information thereby required inserted therein, shall be produced to the minister solemnising the marriage, or shall be filled up in the presence of such minister, and shall be signed by the parties contracting the marriage, and by the witnesses, male or female, present thereat, not being less than two, and also by the minister officiating, and be delivered to the parties contracting the marriage, who shall, within three days thereafter, either deliver, or send by post, such schedule to the registrar of the parish wherein the marriage was solemnised."

FORM I.

O Lord our God, we draw near to thee, to render thee the homage which we owe to our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. We desire to renew and to express our gratitude, our love, and our obedience to thee.

Day by day hast thou led us by thy right hand, and night by night have we rested in thee. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us ; and still thine arm is stretched out to protect us, and thy bounty, and grace, and faithfulness are the same as ever to supply our wants, and make our cup run over.

We give thee thanks, gracious God, for Jesus Christ.

In him may we be pardoned and accepted. May that mercy which is secured for sinners through him be extended to us ; and may all the blessings of that covenant which he hath purchased with his blood be communicated to us. In every scene and circumstance of our life, lead our thoughts to thee, and fill our souls with holy affections.

Grant, O Lord, that thy blessing may rest upon those in thy presence, whom thou in thy providence art now leading into a new relation. May they walk in the light of thy countenance, be sanctified by thy grace, and find acceptance with thee in all they undertake and do. And all that we ask is for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Advocate and Mediator. Amen.

After prayer, the minister directs the parties to stand forth,—the bridegroom at the bride's right hand,—and addresses them as follows :—

Marriage is an ordinance of divine institution. It is the most intimate union which exists in the present world. The persons who are thus united are joined together in a more intimate relation than any other which exists, or can exist, among mankind.

No attachment is so strong, no tenderness is so great, as that which is originated and cherished by this institution. This is directly predicted, and very forcibly declared, in these words:—"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife, and they twain shall be one." Accordingly, the union of affections, interests, labours, and life, here existing, has no parallel in the present world.

It is a perpetual union. The connexion is entered into by both parties for life. God has constituted it, by joining the parties with his own infinite authority, and has forbidden man to put them asunder.

It is a union also formed by a most solemn covenant. In this covenant God is appealed to as a witness of the sincere affections and upright designs of the parties: both of whom engage mutually the exercise of those affections, and the pursuit of that conduct, which, together, are the most efficacious means of their mutual happiness.

It is certainly a great felicity when husbands and wives harmonise, not only in their natural temper and dispositions, but in their tastes, their aims, and desires, and especially in their moral principles and religious sentiments. If love be founded upon internal excellence, upon piety and virtue, it will be lasting and inviolable. Be assured, then, that piety and godliness are the most solid foundations of happiness in all relations and circumstances in which you are placed.

These duties, and others connected with the marriage relation, you are in all faithfulness to perform to each other. Are you not ?

If they assent, he goes on to say, If any objections be known why — and — should not be united in lawful wedlock, let it now be declared.

Join hands.

Do you take this woman, whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful and wedded wife ; and do you promise, before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to her a faithful and loving husband, till God shall separate you by death ?

Answer—I do.

Do you take this man, whom you now hold by the

hand, to be your lawful and wedded husband ; and do you promise, before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to him a faithful, a dutiful, and loving wife, till God shall separate you by death ?

Answer—I do.

In the name of God I now declare you to be married persons ; and “whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Let us pray—

O Lord, in thy presence is fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore, which thou hast provided for them that love thee. These blessings thou hast promised only to those who seek them through Jesus Christ, in the spirit of believing and earnest prayer.

We pray, O Lord, that thy blessing may rest upon thy servants who have now been joined together according to thy holy institution and ordinance. May they ever keep in mind the marriage covenant into which they have entered, and faithfully fulfil the vows they have taken upon them. Watch around them, to bless them and to do them good. Oh, satisfy them early with thy mercy, that they may rejoice and be glad in thee all their days.

May the friends and relations of both parties ever have reason to rejoice in the connexion which has now been formed, and in love may they serve one another. May they be united in ties more close than the ties of nature, and more durable than that which abides till death.

O gracious Lord, visit us with thy salvation, and graciously hear our requests, for Christ's sake. Amen.

FORM II.

PRAYER.

O Lord, it becomes us in all our ways to acknowledge thee, and upon all our undertakings to implore thy blessing ! We are ever receiving renewed tokens of thy goodness and mercy. Make us grateful unto thee, not only for the temporal mercies which we enjoy, but more especially for the spiritual blessings which, through Jesus Christ, thou hast bestowed upon us.

Thou, O Lord, art ready to forgive ; thou waitest to be gracious ! Thou dost incline thine ear ; thou dost abundantly pardon. Oh, wash us in the blood of thy dear Son, sanctify us by his Spirit, and accept of us in his merits ! Let grace regulate and sanctify all our words and actions. Make us faithful, diligent, and circumspect in all the duties of our several places and relations. Be graciously present with us, O Lord, at this time, and grant that the connexion which is now to be formed may be sanctioned and enriched by thy special blessing ! Hear us, and accept of us through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Much of the happiness of human life depends on the faithful discharge of the duties which result from the relations in which we stand one to another. All are not under obligations to perform the same duties, for these are often determined by the state and circumstances in which we are placed. It is evident that special and peculiar duties are founded upon the different relations of

man. There are reciprocal duties sacredly binding upon husbands and wives, who are joined in the closest relation and most intimate union that subsist in this world, and in the faithful, and constant, and conscientious performance of which obligations their happiness in this life, and also in the life to come, is deeply involved.

The marriage-bond was the earliest of all the obligations enjoined on the human race. Adam, speaking by direct inspiration, pronounced, as the general law of mankind, "A man shall leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife." Thus we have the bond appointed by the Creator himself, and appointed not only to be the most general obligation, but the most permanent. They shall be one flesh, a combined nature in thought, in interests, and in affections, utterly indissoluble in this world.

In regard to the duties mutually binding upon husbands and wives, and which must devolve upon you from the union that is now to be formed, the first is sincere love and undissembled affection. Without reciprocal affection, it is impossible to preserve that unity and harmony, and to enjoy that happiness which persons fondly promise themselves in the conjugal relation. Love is the strongest cement of human souls, and the foundation of all true conjugal felicity; and where this is wanting, discord and misery necessarily ensue. All who look for the enjoyment of peace and happiness in the matrimonial union without constant and cordial love, will find themselves miserably disappointed; and as their love should go with them through the whole of life, they should carefully pursue such a course of conduct as is calculated to preserve and strengthen it, and daily avoid all occasions that tend to impair or deaden that principle. Surely the command of God, the nearness of the relations, and their blended interests, should oblige husbands and wives to *the duty of love.*

Another duty, common to husband and wife, is fidelity, or a just observation of their solemn vows and engagements. Fidelity is the foundation of all marriage promises, and when this is overturned, the contract itself is no longer binding on the unoffending party. How careful, then, should you be, not only to adhere strictly to the letter of your marriage vow, but watchfully to avoid all occasions that may frustrate the chief ends of its institution.

It is, moreover, reciprocally incumbent upon you to promote one another's spiritual interest and edification, by recommending each other in your prayers to the protection and mercy of a good and gracious God. Your mutual interest engages you to such wise and holy conduct, for if you have the fear of God in your hearts, *you* will not fail to be a good husband, nor *you* to be a good wife. When grace reigns in the heart, subduing its evil passions, peace, which is a fruit of the Spirit of God, will sweeten every relation. These duties and obligations you are in all faithfulness to perform to each other. Are you not?

If any objection be known why — and — should not be united in lawful wedlock, let it now be declared.

Join hands.

Do you take this woman, whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful and wedded wife; and do you promise before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to her a faithful and loving husband till God shall separate you by death?

Answer—I do.

Do you take this man, whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful and wedded husband; and do you promise before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to him a faithful, a dutiful, and loving wife till God shall separate you by death?

Answer—I do.

In the name of God, I now declare you to be married persons ; and “whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

Let us pray—

Let thy blessing, O Lord, rest upon those whom we now have in thy name joined in a marriage covenant ! May their hearts be given to thee supremely. May they make thy will and glory the rule and end of their affection and their being. May the Word of God and prayer sanctify their all. May they be long spared to each other, prospered in their basket and in their store. Above all, may they be blessed with all spiritual blessings, the promoters of each other's piety, the bearers of each other's burdens, and the helpers of each other's joy, walking hand in hand to their home in heaven.

May they, and all with whom they are connected, be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord their God.

Hear us, O Lord, and accept of us in the Beloved !
Amen.

FORM III.

PRAYER.

O Lord, help us to draw nigh unto thee by faith, and pour upon us the abundance of thy grace ! May we be ever mindful of thy merciful providence, thy perpetual presence, thy sustaining hand. But how unworthy are we of thy gracious regard. We can never deserve the least of thy mercies ; but, oh, give us the spirit of gratitude and love ! We confess that, notwithstanding thy

gracious dealings towards us, we have neither loved thee nor obeyed thee as we ought to have done ; but have thou compassion on us for Jesus' sake. Do thou, O Lord, enable us to flee for refuge to the hope that is set before us in Christ Jesus ! Help us to perceive our need of him, and to trust in the all-sufficiency of his merit and mercy.

May thy blessing rest upon thy servants before thee who are now to be united in marriage. We commend them to thy care and protection. May they be united in the enjoyment of thy favour, and in the performance of thy will. May thy grace and peace be with them. And do thou hear us, and accept of us, and answer us for the sake of Jesus Christ our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

The Word of God not only gives direction for the performance of those duties which we owe to all men as fellow-creatures, but also respecting those which are peculiar to the relation in which we stand to one another as that of husband and wife, as that in which Adam and Eve stood, and received the blessing of God.

Marriage was expressly appointed by God, and is an engagement which cannot be dissolved, except by the infidelity of one of the parties. Our Saviour, having a reference to the decree of God, expressly says that the husband and wife are one flesh, and that, being joined by God, no man can separate them. As to the duties peculiar to the married state, the first unquestionably is fidelity to the marriage vow, the violation of which is repeatedly threatened with the wrath of God. Doubtless, the violation on the part of the wife is more aggravated, on account of the consequences to which it may lead ; but the crime, abstractly, is the same in both parties, and shall receive the same

punishment. Another duty is conjugal affection. "Let every one of you, in particular, so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband."

The duty of the husband is to love, cherish, comfort, and provide for his wife. The duty of the wife is to love, solace, and encourage her husband amid his cares and toils, yielding to his authority as given by God. Besides these duties, it is binding on both to promote each other's progress in religion, and to assist one another in their pilgrimage to that better country where they hope to dwell. The more perfectly that this duty is performed, the greater will be the advantage of the connexion, and the higher will the happiness be which results from it.

That union which takes place from love and solid attachment between parties, of piety, of similar dispositions, and accordant habits, bids fair to be productive of the greatest earthly happiness conferred on man.

Should love decline, there is no surer way of extinguishing it altogether, and producing daily misery, than apparent indifference, neglect, or disrespect. Your duty, then, should be to preserve a conscience void of offence, and to urge each other to that faith in Christ, that love to God, which alone can crown your happiness here, and make you happy hereafter.

These duties, and others connected with the marriage relation, you engage and promise, through Divine grace, to perform to each other. Do you not?

If they assent, he goes on to say,—

If any objection be known why — and — should not be united in lawful wedlock, let it now be declared.

Join hands.

Do you take this woman, whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful and wedded wife; and do you

promise before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to her a faithful and loving husband till God shall separate you by death ?

Answer—I do.

Do you take this man, whom you now hold by the hand, to be your lawful and wedded husband ; and do you promise before God, and in the presence of these witnesses, to be to him a faithful, a dutiful, and loving wife till God shall separate you by death ?

Answer—I do.

I declare you to be husband and wife according to God's ordinance. " Whom God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

PRAYER.

Almighty God, we bless thy holy name for all thy mercies, especially for thy spiritual mercies. We beseech thee to fill our hearts with a due sense of thy unspeakable love in the redemption of our souls by the precious blood of Christ. Shed abroad in our hearts the love of Christ by the Holy Spirit. May we trust in Christ alone for salvation. Give us grace, O God, that, amidst all our earthly cares and occupations, we may never forget thee. Thy grace is sufficient to deliver us from the love of sin, and to bring us into the enjoyment of all the blessings and privileges of thy children.

We pray, O Lord, that thy blessing may descend and rest upon thy servants whom we have in thy name joined together in marriage. As thou hast called them together by thy providence, so do thou sanctify them by thy grace. May they fulfil their vows, and perform the several duties which they owe to thee and to one another. Guide them by thy counsel, and protect them by thy power. May they live devoted to thy fear, enjoy the communications

of thy grace, and the marks of thy favour, and finally obtain everlasting life. May the friends and relatives of both parties ever have reason to rejoice in the connexion which has now been formed. And to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever. Amen.

BAPTISM.

FORM I.

"THERE shall be produced to the Minister officiating in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism of any child, a certificate of the Registration of the birth of such child ; and failing such production, such Minister shall forthwith intimate the baptism of such child, with all the information which he may have regarding the birth and parentage of such child, to the Registrar of the Parish in which the parents of such child resides."

The ordinance of Baptism is usually administered in the church, on the Sabbath, immediately after the sermon is ended ; but it is sometimes administered in private, and when so administered it should invariably be commenced with prayer.

INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou art a great God and great King, the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength. We desire to come to thee in the new and living way of thine own appointment, relying for acceptance before thee, on the merits and intercession of our Lord and Saviour. It is our guilt which needs thy mercy. God

be merciful to us sinners. Incline and enable us to come to Jesus Christ, weary and heavy laden as we are, and may we find rest in him. Make us sensible of our guilt and ruin ; and help us to rely on his blood, and build all our hopes on his righteousness. Do thou, O Lord, grant that being grafted in Christ we may live to him. Suffer us not to deceive ourselves by a mere form and profession of religion ; but give us true faith that we may really abide in Christ, and bear much fruit. Quicken thou our souls. Regenerate and sanctify us. May we know what is the hope of our calling. May we walk in the light.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, that thou hast been pleased to bless this family with another proof of thy great goodness. May this new pledge and token of thy love be preserved by thy mercy and dedicated to thy glory. Do thou guard his (her) infancy, and preserve his (her) youth, and train him (her) up for thine everlasting kingdom.

May the mother of this child live before thee, having in the moment of her extremity experienced thy favour compassing her as with a shield, and crowning her with songs of deliverance. Do thou, most gracious God and Father, perfect that which concerneth her.

May the solemn pledge of pious duty to this child, which his (her) parents are now to give, be fulfilled happily by thine aid, to thy glory and to the good of this family.

Lord, impress upon us a deep sense of our baptismal obligations. May we perform all our solemn duties in a simple dependence on the promise and aids of thy grace.

Hear these our prayers, O God ; pardon our sins, and accept of us for Christ's sake. Amen.

The minister says to the parent, "Present your child for baptism;" and when this has been done, proceeds to address him as follows:—

In presenting your child for baptism, you profess it to be your desire that he (she) may be admitted a member of Christ's visible Church, and receive the seal of the covenant of grace. Is not this your desire?

Baptism is an ordinance of Christ's appointment. It is the initiatory rite of the Christian Church, the first public recognition of a personal connexion with it; and it is peculiarly fitted, by its own nature, for serving this purpose. It was commanded to be so employed by our Lord, and was so employed by his apostles.

It is the token of the covenant of grace in the New Testament dispensation, as circumcision was in that of the Old Testament.

When God established his Church in the family of Abraham, and separated him and his seed from the world to his service, he renewed his covenant with him, the same gracious covenant which believers in all ages had to rely on, saying, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Thus a gracious and saving relationship was instituted between God and Abraham, and Abraham's children. This promise was the same as that of the new covenant, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people," the promise on which all our privileges are founded. Now, the children of Abraham, and all his descendants from their birth, were interested in this covenant, and partook of its blessings. God himself instated them into their privileges, as members of his Church, by express command; and when he gave circumcision as a token of this covenant, he ordained that the infants should re-

ceive it as the outward recognition of their birthright in the family of the Lord's people. The children of believers who were received into the Church before the law, were retained in it under the gospel ; and that the Lord Jesus Christ confirmed their right in the New Testament which had been bestowed by God in the Old. They lost their place in the family of God by the punishment of Adam's sin coming on them through their sinful parents, and they find it again by the benefits of Christ's righteousness visiting them through their believing parents.

The circumcision of the children of the Lord's people in the Old Testament Church is a warrant for their baptism in the New Testament Church. Baptism now holds the place that circumcision formerly held. And if the token of the covenant was extended to them before Christ came, there is no reason why it should be denied to them now, when he has not denied it.

Baptism is an outward visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The water made use of in this ordinance points out, or represents, the blood of Christ in its purifying efficacy. The action of applying water to the person represents the saving application of that blood by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and this being done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the act of baptism, represents the dedication of the person to the service of God in Christ.

You, the parent of the child now to be baptized, profess your belief in the doctrines of the gospel of Christ, and you engage to perform the duties which these doctrines imply.

You present your child in the faith of God's promise, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed," and in prayer, that the promise may be fulfilled.

Above all, it is incumbent on you to shew your baptized children the copy of a holy and consistent example. If this be wanting, no instructions, however useful, no discipline, however faithful, will prove of any avail.

All these duties, in a devout reliance on the strength which is made perfect in weakness, do you now solemnly promise, assiduously and faithfully, to perform? Do you not?

PRAYER BEFORE BAPTISM.

Let us pray—

Almighty and ever blessed God, we desire to approach thee through Jesus Christ, and to pour out our hearts before thee. We acknowledge our dependence upon thee for every blessing we enjoy; and we praise thee for the continual obligations under which we are laid by the kindness of thy providence, and the riches of thy grace. Humble us under a sense of our unworthiness. But while conscious that we are nothing and deserve nothing, let us not despair of thy forgiveness. Direct our views, we beseech thee, to him who taketh away the sin of the world, and enable us to rely on the efficacy of his sacrifice, and the perfection of his righteousness, for pardon and peace, for acceptance and eternal life.

We pray, O Lord, that as thou hast brought us into thy covenant, and given us the hope of thy promises in Christ Jesus, so thou wouldst graciously vouchsafe to sanctify and bless thine own ordinance at this time; joining the inward baptism of thy Spirit with the outward baptism with water; making it to this infant a seal of adoption, remission of sin, regeneration, and eternal life; that this child, being planted in the likeness of Christ's death, may also be in the likeness of his resur-

rection ; that the body of sin being destroyed, he may walk in newness of life. Hear us, O Lord, and accept of us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The minister now sprinkles water on the face of the child ; and pronouncing its name aloud, says, " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God."

PRAYER AFTER BAPTISM.

Follow with blessing, O gracious God, that ordinance which we have now, in accordance with thy direction, administered. May this child, who has been baptized, be received into the number of those who are washed in the blood of the Lamb, and whose names are written in the book of life. We recommend him (or her) to thine almighty protection, and grant that he (or she) may be devoted to thy service ; may his (or her) life be precious in thy sight ; guard his (or her) infancy ; and preserve his (or her) youth, enrich his (or her) mind with useful knowledge, and adorn his (or her) heart with gracious dispositions ; keep him (or her) from the snares of a world that lieth in wickedness, and train him (or her) up for thine everlasting kingdom.

We thank thee on behalf of the mother, that thou hast made her the living mother of a living child. Fill her heart with thanksgiving and love to her Preserver, and may she devote to thy service the life which thou hast spared in danger.

Enable thou the contracting parent to fulfil the engagements under which he now hath come. Shew him how great is the responsibility thou hast devolved upon him. Make both parents to feel how much it must depend upon their example, upon their precepts, upon

their prayers, whether this child shall be brought up to lead a godly and Christian life.

Keep all of us solemnly mindful of our baptismal engagements. Teach us the value of our souls, and of the salvation which has been wrought for them in Christ Jesus. May we never be ashamed of confessing him before men ; but, amidst all discouragements and difficulties, give us boldness to shew ourselves his true disciples.

These our prayers we desire to offer up in the name and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

FORM II.

The minister says to the parent, " Present your child for baptism ;" and when this has been done, proceeds to address him as follows:—

In presenting your child for baptism, you profess it to be your desire that he (or she) may be admitted a member of the visible Church, and receive the seal of the new covenant. Is not this your desire ?

God hath been pleased to reveal his will to man in various ways. Besides the discovery which he makes of himself in the dispensations of his providence, he makes known to us his will by words, which is the ordinary way we acquire the knowledge of Divine truths, or by visible signs, which are sometimes called figures, or sacraments. There have been external rites and ceremonies in all the forms of religion that ever existed in the world. The religion of heathen nations hath always abounded in

them. The Jewish religion was loaded with ceremonies of Divine appointment. Such were sacrifices, which we have reason to believe were prescribed by God to Adam immediately after his fall. Such was the rite of circumcision given to Abraham and his children. Such was the multitude of ordinances instituted by Moses, in which, by various offerings and washings, and sprinklings with water, the blessings of the covenant of grace were represented in symbolical language. Even in the gospel of Christ, the most spiritual religion that ever was in the world, there are two ordinances of this kind,—Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism was instituted by Jesus Christ after his resurrection, and immediately before his ascension into glory, when he gave this commission to his apostles to administer it,—“Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Baptism has come in the place of circumcision. Circumcision was a sign of the covenant of grace which God entered into with Abraham and his seed, and a seal of the righteousness of the faith, and he who received it was constituted a member of the Jewish Church. Baptism is significant of the same great truth,—consecration to God; and it is accompanied by the same promise, “I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.” It is evident, therefore, that as the entrance into the Jewish Church was by circumcision, so the entrance into the Christian Church is by baptism. Hence the administration of baptism is here prescribed to those who are made disciples, and as such disposed to become formally the members of Christ's Church. Hence it derives its federal or covenant character, and is rightly considered as a mystery or sacrament. Let it not be understood, however, that the act of baptism with water constitutes men Christians, for it supposes that those

who are baptized have a previous right to gospel privileges ; for the infants of believing parents are born within the covenant, and have the promises of it made to them.

Baptism is a sign and seal of all the blessings of the covenant of grace, and of our engagement to be the Lord's, which it actually is to all who worthily receive it. These blessings are our ingrafting into Christ, or union with him. By nature we are branches of the first Adam, from whom we derive deadness and corruption. Christ the second Adam is the true vine, into whom, when we are ingrafted, or transplanted, we are quickened and purified from sin and corruption ; and this spiritual purification, and our need of it from the very womb, are signified by the water in baptism sprinkled on infants, who are free from all actual transgression of the law of God, but not from a corrupt nature derived from their parents. Another blessing signified by baptism is the remission of sins through the blood of Christ. As water washes away the stains of the body, so the blood of Christ cleanseth from guilt. God, for his sake, forgiveth all sin.

Presenting, therefore, your child for baptism, you profess your belief in the doctrine of man's primitive apostasy from God, with its unhappy effects on the whole human race ; the method of recovery through Christ ; the work of the Spirit in applying a purchased redemption ; the full and free offers of Christ, and of salvation through him, made in the gospel, to the very chief of sinners ; the nature of that faith which unites to Christ, and of that holiness which makes men meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. You promise before God and the Church that if God shall be pleased to spare you and this child, you will seek to unfold and explain

to him (her), as he (she) grows up, the nature of baptism, and impress on his (her) mind the solemnity of his (her) engagements. And you will set before him (her) in your own conduct the example of a pious and Christian life. And having devoted your child to Christ in this ordinance, how importunate and prayerfully solicitous should you be that the blessing symbolised may be actually bestowed ! These things you now profess to believe, and these duties you promise, through Divine grace, to perform. Do you not ?

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou givest us life, and thou givest us all the blessings we enjoy in life. Thou hast given us the greatest gift thou hadst to bestow. Thou hast given Jesus Christ, thine unspeakable gift, for the redemption of a lost world, and surely thou wilt with him freely give us all things which thou knowest to be good for us.

Give us grace, O Lord, to repent of our sins, and to believe in Christ to the saving of our souls. In his name may we trust. In his righteousness may we be exalted. By his blood purge our conscience from dead works.

We desire, O Lord, with grateful hearts to bless thee for the distinguished and peculiar privileges which as Christians we enjoy. We bless thee for the ordinances of the gospel, and especially for the sacrament of baptism ; and we pray that thy blessing may attend the dispensation of it to this infant. Sanctify so much of the element of water as is to be made use of in this solemnity. Whilst we baptize outwardly with water, do thou baptize inwardly with the Holy Ghost, that so this child may be admitted not only into thy visible Church

upon earth, but also into thy invisible, spiritual, redeemed, justified, and sanctified family. Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children, and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us ; and establish thou the work of our hands ; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it, for thine own name's sake. Amen.

The minister now sprinkles water on the face of the child ; and pronouncing its name aloud, says, " I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God."

Let us pray—

Ratify in heaven, O Lord, that which we have now done upon the earth, in the name and by the appointment, and depending on the blessing of the great Head of the Church, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May the child that has now been admitted a member of the visible Church be received into the number of those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life. May the great Shepherd of the sheep take charge of him (her) as one of the lambs of his flock. May he regard him (her) with special care.

We, O Lord, pray that thou wouldst not take him (her) out of the world, but that thou wouldst keep him (her) from the evil that is in the world. Do thou spare him (her), if it be according to thy will, to be a comfort to the parents to whom in trust thou hast given him (her).

We pray that the engaging parent may be enabled with fidelity and perseverance to discharge the duties under which he is laid, not only by parental tie but also by this solemn transaction. May the Divine Spirit guide

and bless all his efforts for the godly upbringing of his child.

We praise thy name for a living mother and a living child. We thank thee for thy goodness to the mother, and we beseech thee to restore her to health and strength. Fill her heart with thanksgiving and love to thee, and may she pay her vows in the presence of thy people.

Thy vows are upon us all, O Lord; early were we baptized into the name of Christ, and thus set apart to his service. May baptismal obligations be more strongly felt among us than they have ever yet been, and may every day exhibit new evidence of their sanctifying influence.

We ask all of our covenant God, God in Christ, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. We ask the mercy of God the Father, through the mediation of God the Son, and by the application of God the Holy Ghost. O seal this covenant by thy Spirit, and let us be entirely and for ever thine. Amen.

FORM III.

The minister says to the parent, "Present your child for baptism;" and when this has been done, proceeds to address him as follows:—

In presenting your child for baptism, you profess it to be your desire that he (she) may be admitted a member of Christ's visible Church, and receive the seal of the new covenant. Is not this your desire?

Baptism is a sacrament which Christ hath ordained for

the sealing and confirming and renewing of the covenant of grace made between God and man, through the mediation of Jesus Christ.

The covenant thus sealed by baptism implies, that although you are a sinner, and so have lost all right and title to God's blessings—yet God the Father doth give himself to be your reconciled and loving Father ; and God the Son doth give himself to be your Saviour ; and God the Holy Ghost giveth himself to be your sanctifier—so that all your sins shall be pardoned, and strength of grace given you to do God's will ; and, finally, eternal life and happiness bestowed upon you, and all upon the condition that you repent of your sins, and watch against and resist all temptations to sin ; and that you firmly believe the gospel of Christ, and taking the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit for the one true God, worship and serve him only, and endeavour to obey all his laws as long as you live.

Baptism is the application of water, as expressive of the need of purification, and as emblematic of the influences from God, that can alone cleanse the soul. It represents the washing of the soul from sin, by the blood of Christ, "for those who are baptized are baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins." It represents the union of the soul to Christ, and its forming a part of his spiritual body, "for by one spirit are ye all baptized into one body." It represents the regeneration, and, consequently, sanctification by the Spirit, "being saved, not by works of righteousness which ye have done, but according to his mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." It represents your resurrection unto life, "for, if ye have been planted together in the likeness of his death, ye shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

Baptism, then, is not merely an admission into the Christian Church, not merely being made a member of the Church on earth, but is a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, and of your being united to Christ, and, consequently, made a partaker of the benefits of his death and resurrection. It superseded the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which Abraham had, and continues for ever to be a sign of your adoption into the number of the children of God,—“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.”

When one arrived at the age of maturity is baptized, he avows his acceptance of this salvation, and makes this surrender of himself to the service of God his Saviour. When you bring your infant offspring to be baptized, you express your earnest desire that they may share the same benefits, and be the redeemed worshippers and servants of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You renew your own profession of faith in the great truths of religion, and devotedness to this one God in three persons. Further, you engage to employ all the means of grace which are put within your reach—specially you will pray for your child while he is yet in years of infancy, and with him after he comes to years of understanding. You will give him such an education as your circumstances in life will admit, and particularly you will instruct him in, and enable him to peruse for himself that word of life which, through faith in Christ Jesus, is able to make wise unto salvation. You will set before your family a Christian example, walking before the Lord in his statutes and ordinances blameless—waiting upon him regularly in the assemblies of his people, and reducing to daily practice the requirements of his word.

And thus, by prayer, instruction, and example, seeking to train up your child in the way he should go, that when he is old he may not depart from it. These and all other obligations incumbent on you as a Christian parent you engage, through Divine grace assisting you, to perform. Do you not?

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou art our God, our strength in whom we will trust, thou art worthy to be praised. Unto thee do we lift up our souls.

How precious is thy love! How rich is thy grace! How unspeakable is thy mercy in Christ Jesus! Thou art holy in sanctifying the unholy, just in accepting the unjust. Thou hast published the method of reconciliation, the scheme of mercy. As there is nothing too gracious for thee to do, nothing too transcendent for us to need, we would thankfully and humbly leave to thee the way of our salvation, the method of our redemption. Apply this remedy to our souls. Give us a rich experience of it. May it be the source of vital piety. May we know that we are of God. The Spirit alone can impart to us gracious dispositions. From him may our fruit be found. May he work within us all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power.

We, O Lord, are highly favoured. We enjoy varied and distinguished privileges. Thou hast given precious promises, not only to ourselves but to our children. Let not the children of our vows, the children of our prayers, fall from our profession. May thy mark be upon them. Put thy Spirit within them. Number them with such as those of whom is the kingdom of heaven.

We desire to thank thee for that ordinance, of thine

appointment, by which we are admitted into thy Church upon earth. We pray that thy blessing may attend the dispensation of it to this child. Whilst we baptize outwardly with water, do thou baptize inwardly with the Holy Ghost; and all that we ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

The minister now sprinkles water on the face of the child, and pronouncing aloud his name, says, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghosts, one God."

Let us pray—

O Lord, do thou keep alive in our hearts the solemn service in which we have been engaged. May the child that has now been baptized in thy name be received into the number of thy adopted children, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God. Grant that this child may live before thee. For a long life do thou strengthen him, to a virtuous life do thou lead him, and with a happy life do thou bless him, and shew him thy salvation.

Do thou, O Lord, grant to the mother of this child a return of her former strength. Turn her sorrow into joy, and her tears into the overflowings of a grateful heart.

We pray that the engaging parent may be enabled with fidelity and perseverance to discharge the duties under which he is laid, not only by parental tie but also by this most solemn transaction.

May both parents be careful to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. May they remember that they are accountable to thee, and may the ways of duty be always in their hearts.

We pray, O Lord, that we all may be enabled to carry

the principle of duty into every scene of life and relation of society. May we study to shew ourselves approved unto God. Wash away our sins in the blood of the Lamb. Accept of us in his merits. May we be the subjects of thy rich and loving grace. Quicken us together with Christ. Write thy law in our hidden part. All that we ask is for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

FORM

FOR ADMITTING ADULTS OR UNBAPTIZED PERSONS MEMBERS OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

Those who are to be admitted to sealing ordinances require to be examined as to their knowledge of, and belief in, the great truths of religion. When their knowledge is judged satisfactory, and when nothing appears in their life and conversation to prevent their admission, the minister shall, either in private, or in the presence of the session, or of the congregation, call upon them to make a public profession of their faith.

When baptism is administered in private, or in the presence of the session, it should invariably be preceded by prayer.

Let us pray—

Almighty God, who alone hast life in thyself, and who art the only author of light and life unto all ; we come to thee as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in him the God of all comfort, and the source of all blessedness.

We acknowledge, gracious God, our unworthiness of thy mercies ; but we bless thee for Jesus Christ, who died for our offences. In him we desire to be found ; and for his sake we entreat thee to forgive us all our sins, and to cleanse us from all our unrighteousness.

We confess, O Lord, that we are guilty sinners, and that we have justly forfeited thy favour ; but adored be thy name, thou hast graciously promised mercy and forgiveness to all who confess and forsake their sins. Accept, we beseech thee, our unfeigned sorrow for our past transgressions ; and grant that we may never so presume upon thy mercy as to despise the riches of thy goodness ; but let a sense of thy forbearance and long-suffering work in us repentance and amendment of life.

Do thou, O Lord, convince us of our weakness, that we may come to thee for grace and strength to obtain the victory over our corrupt passions, and to withstand the various temptations, and to bear up under the many trials to which we are exposed. Strengthen us with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. May we never be insensible to any of the blessings of the Christian covenant ; never neglectful of the means of grace ; nor blind to the mercies vouchsafed to us in the whole course of our lives.

Mercifully be with us, we entreat thee, in the solemn service in which we are now engaged, and make us partakers of thy grace through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The adult here stands up.

You present yourself with the view that you may be admitted a member of Christ's visible Church, and that you may receive the seal of the covenant of grace. Is not this your desire ?

Answer—It is.

You are now called upon to make a solemn profession of your Faith.

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to be the word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?

Do you acknowledge the doctrines therein contained concerning the being and perfections of God ; the guilt and deformity of human nature ; the divinity and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ ; the personality and work of the Holy Spirit ; and the necessity of the regenerating influences and sanctifying operations of the Spirit on the heart of man ?

Do you declare that, so far as you know your own heart, you have cordially received the testimony of God concerning his Son ; that you are resting exclusively on the finished work of Christ, and the promise of God through him, for the salvation of your soul ; and that you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, desiring to be regarded as his disciple, and to be found walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless ?

Is it your firm purpose, trusting in promised grace, to regulate all your conduct by the law of Christ,—carrying your religion into all the relations of life, and endeavouring to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things ?

All these doctrines you profess to believe, and all these duties you do now promise through Divine grace to perform. Do you not ?

In the appointment of baptism, Jesus Christ deferred it till his resurrection had proved him to be the Lord of the dead and the living ; and he prefaced the command, “Go, teach and baptize,” with these words—“All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.”

The apostles were accordingly directed to make disciples of all nations, and then to baptize them. That they understood their commission in this manner is evident from their own declarations,—“Repent, therefore,” said Peter to the Jews, “and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus.” When the Eunuch said to Philip, “See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?” Philip replied, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” Lydia was baptised after the Lord had opened her heart. The jailer was baptized in consequence of his faith. So was Paul; so were Cornelius and his household. From these facts and declarations it is evident that adults were baptized by the apostles after they had become, or were supposed to have become, disciples of Christ; or, in other words, after they were either really or apparently regenerated.

Baptism implies a belief of the remedy provided by God in the gospel for the purification of your soul from sin and all its pollutions. He has provided for the removal of the guilt of sin, by giving his own Son for an atoning sacrifice, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. He also provided for subduing the power of sin, by the effusion of his Holy Spirit to renew and sanctify your corrupt nature. Hence you are said to be “saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” and the mode made use of in baptism is a significant emblem of the blood of Jesus, and of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

But further, baptism implies an acceptance of the blessings purchased by Christ, and a consenting to all the terms and conditions of the new covenant. When you are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this implies a belief in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity—a dedication of those who are baptized to

the worship, and service, and obedience of Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Let us pray—

O God of all grace, who hast of thine infinite mercy provided a Saviour for sinners, we come before thee, encouraged by thy command, to supplicate thy grace to believe in Christ to the saving of our souls.

We have sinned against thee, and are guilty in thy sight. The more we think of our guilt and misery, and of the coldness of our affections, the more do we admire and adore thine infinite goodness and love; that thou mightest justly withdraw from us the privileges we abuse, and the opportunities we neglect; yet thou dost freely continue them to us. May we be deeply and gratefully impressed with a sense of our Christian privileges and blessings.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldest pour down abundantly thy Spirit upon him in thy presence who is now to be admitted a member of Christ's visible Church. Enable him, in faith and love, to offer up himself to thee in the ordinance of baptism. May his original guilt, as well as his actual transgressions, be washed away through the blood of the Lamb that was slain. Sanctify the water that is to be made use of in this ordinance to the mystical washing away of sin, and apply at the same time, by faith, the blood to justify and redeem his soul. Join the inward baptism of the Spirit with the outward baptism with water. All that we ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

The minister now sprinkles water on the face of the adult, and, pronouncing his name aloud, says, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, one God."

Let us pray—

Ratify in heaven, O God, we beseech thee, that which has now been done in thy name upon the earth. May he who has now been admitted a member of the visible Church, be received into the number of thy redeemed people—be sealed by the Holy Spirit of adoption, and loved with an everlasting love. Keep him ever mindful of his vows and promises, and give him grace faithfully to fulfil them. May he consider the obligations under which he is now laid to love and serve thee, the Lord. May he be thine, not merely by outward profession, but thine by regenerating grace. May it become more and more the earnest desire of his soul and the great business of his life to work out his salvation with fear and trembling; and do thou, O Lord, continually work in him both to will and to do of thy good pleasure.

Keep all of us mindful of our baptismal engagements. Enable us to subdue every rebellious thought within us—to mortify every sinful inclination. Make us careful and diligent in the performance of all our duties, that by our fruits we may be known as the true and faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. All these blessings we pray thee to bestow upon us, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.

DISCIPLINE.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted a government and governors in his house, with power to meet for the order and government thereof. He only has a right to give laws to his Church, or to institute rites and ordinances for her observance. His will is the supreme guide of his professing people, his Word their code of laws, and his glory their ultimate end. The authority of church-officers is not original, but subordinate and delegated; that is, as they are the servants of Christ, and act under his commission and in his name, they have power only to declare what the Scriptures reveal as his will, and to pronounce sentence accordingly. If they attempt to establish any other terms of communion than those which his Word warrants, or to undertake to exercise authority in a manner which he has not authorised, they incur guilt, and have no right to exact obedience. Discipline that is exercised faithfully and judiciously, ought to be regarded as one of the most precious means of grace by which offenders are humbled, softened, and brought to repentance,—the Church purged of unworthy members, offences removed, the honour of Christ promoted, real Christians stimulated and improved in their spiritual course, faith-

ful testimony borne against error and crime, and the professing family of Christ made to appear holy and beautiful in the view of the world. Without wholesome discipline for removing offences and excluding the corrupt and profane, there may be an assembly, but there cannot be a Church. The truth is, the exercise of a faithful watch and care over the purity of each other in doctrine, worship, and life, is one of the principal purposes for which the Christian Church was established, and on account of which it is highly prized by every enlightened believer. And it may be safely affirmed, that a large part of all that is holy in the Church at the present day, either in faith or practice, may be ascribed, under God, as much to sound ecclesiastical discipline as to the faithful preaching of the gospel.

And if the maintenance of discipline be all-important to the interests of true religion, it is a matter of no less importance that it be conducted with mildness, prudence, and wisdom.

In Presbyterian Churches, the power of carrying these laws into effect, and of bringing these sanctions to bear upon the consciences of men, is vested in kirk-sessions. The kirk-session is the lowest judicatory in the Church of Scotland. A kirk-session is composed of the minister of the parish, and of lay elders. It is legally convened, when summoned by the minister from the pulpit, or by personal citation to the members. The meetings of session are opened and closed with prayer.

The opening prayer is in such form as the following :—

Let us pray—

O Lord, thou art our refuge and our strength. In thee alone is our help. To thy full and abounding grace,

in Jesus Christ our Lord, we are indebted for our salvation. We thank thee for thine unspeakable love in the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, and for every spiritual blessing conveyed to us through him. We bless thee that thou didst send him into the world to lead us to the knowledge and worship of thee the only true God, to establish in our hearts the love of righteousness, and to train us up for everlasting felicity.

We acknowledge, O Lord, that, notwithstanding all these marks of Divine favour, we dishonour thee and violate our religious profession. Thou knowest our weaknesses, thou knowest our temptations, our sorrows, and our sins. Humble us, O Lord, we beseech thee, under a sense of our sins, and give us to know that there is no remission of sins, but through faith in the blood of thy Son ; by his blood may we be justified, and have peace with thee. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to turn us from all iniquity ; create us again after thine own image, that we may live to thy praise. May it be the continual desire of our souls to obey and serve thee, and may life be valued principally by us as an opportunity of doing thy will and keeping thy commandments before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father who is in heaven.

And we pray, O Lord, that being now convened as a court of thy Church, we may receive thy countenance and blessing. May we be deeply impressed with the importance of the trust committed to us, and of the responsibility that attaches to us, and in every step of our proceedings may we be guided by that wisdom which cometh from above.

We will go forward in thy strength, trusting for pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Compeared D. A., and C. B., his wife, both members of the Church, residing at —, confessing themselves guilty of the sin of antenuptial fornication, and expressing their penitence for the same.

The moderator having stated that he had had an opportunity of dealing with them privately, and having reported favourably regarding them, the session agreed to absolve them at this meeting; and, accordingly, the moderator solemnly and suitably addresses them in these terms :—

Confession of sin is necessary. God requires it of you; not for his information of the iniquities you have committed, for he knows them, in all their number and aggravations, but to convince you of your guilt and misery, to bring your sins to remembrance, to excite in you an humbling and lively sense of their evil and danger. When you transgress God's holy law, you do not always perceive the guilt and wickedness of your transgressions. Your natural corruption and evil habits seduce you, your passions blind you, and prevent you from reflecting on the injury you do to your own souls. Now, sincere confession leads you to consider your ways and doings, removes from the eyes of your mind the veil that covered your sins from your sight, disposes you to hate them, and to desire ardently the free and full forgiveness of them, through God's mercy richly manifested in the gospel of Christ.

But this confession must be accompanied with shame and contrition, and with deep sorrow and remorse of mind, for having offended God. For confession supposes a fault to be known and avowed. True confession of sin springs from a broken and contrite heart. The main

thing is, that your grief be sincere, that it proceed from the heart, that it be productive of abhorrence of all sin, and especially that it be accompanied with full purpose of heart to forsake them. The renouncing of sin is not less necessary than the confessing of it. In some respects it may be considered as more necessary, since it is the criterion by which you may judge of the truth of your repentance and conversion towards God. And without reformation of heart and life, what are your open confession and regrets, but a new dishonour done to God, and a new source of grief to yourselves, which proves, indeed, that you are convinced of your guilt, that you feel some dissatisfaction in having offended God, and that you dread his displeasure ; but which proves, at the same time, that you do not love him so much as to sacrifice to him your evil inclinations and vicious pleasures, that these are dearer to you than his approbation, than his grace, and his salvation ? How can you expect that God will look favourably upon you, if you continue to offend him by persisting in your sins ? or can you hope that he will shew you mercy, when you depart from the way, and neglect the appointed means of obtaining it ? “ He that covereth his sins shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” Instead of covering your sins, whatever you know of the depravity of your hearts, and of the transgressions of your lives, you should confess them to God—praying that he would more effectually convince you of your vileness, and of your need of his pardoning mercy. Who can tell the guilt that stains your lives, and the evil workings that defile your hearts ? But with all these you must go to God, and bewail before him what you could not disclose to your dearest friend on earth. You ought to acknowledge and lament, at a throne of grace, not only your

open and gross violations of his law, but also the hardness of your heart. Yes, if you confess your sins in the spirit of true repentance, you shall obtain mercy, and the remission of all your sins ; not only of some slight offences, but of crimes of the deepest dye. For this most precious blessing, you have the word and promises of God, which assure you that, if you confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive you your sins, and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness. The mercy of God in Christ is the only safe refuge for sinners, for the most guilty, provided they truly repent of their sins and believe on Christ ; but it is not a refuge of impunity, for such as persevere in their iniquities. You must apply, then, to Christ for that pardon, which he has procured by his blood, and freely offers to all who, renouncing their own righteousness, flee to him as their only hope and city of refuge, the only Saviour of the lost, the friend of the chief of sinners.

There is no true repentance without faith in Christ. Although repentance and confession do not merit the pardon of transgression, they are indispensable to the real enjoyment of forgiving mercy. Hence the wisdom and grace of that arrangement which connects the manifestation of Divine forgiveness with the sorrows of penitence, and the humble confession of iniquity before God. And what tongue can tell the happiness of that hour when the soul, oppressed by sin, is enabled freely to pour forth its sorrows before God, and to take hold of his covenanted mercy in Jesus Christ ! God, in pardoning sinners who humbly and sincerely confess their sins, diffuses through their hearts a sense of his love, and of that peace which passeth all understanding. Your present state may be that of suffering, that of shame, that of humiliation, resulting from your guilt ; but your whole state will be

reversed in being reconciled to God. The Holy Spirit can renew your depraved nature, restore your perverse habits, obliterate your past offences. "To be carnally-minded is death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die ; but if ye, through the Spirit, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." In order to succeed in fulfilling all those duties required of you, it is necessary to pour out your hearts in humble supplication before God, for without prayer all other precautions will be found ineffectual. Prayer is one of the most effectual means of subduing your corruptions and lusts. The prayer of faith is always conducive to this desirable end. Let your prayer be importunate and sincere, and it shall be heard and answered. It is an efficacious means of keeping the flesh under subjection, and of advancing the Divine life in the soul.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church, and by authority of this session, I hereby absolve you from the scandal of this sin, and restore you to the privileges of the Church.

Let us pray—

Eternal and almighty Lord God, we would approach thy throne with feelings of deep humility and contrition, and in the name of Jesus Christ, our great Mediator, acknowledge our transgressions, and supplicate thy mercy.

Our sins, O Lord, are a heavy burden ; but we look to him who died upon the cross to take them away. We have no righteousness of our own, but we place our trust in him who is the Lord our righteousness. We have redemption in his blood. May he who taketh of the things of Christ, shew them to us. Let us learn in-

creasingly the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. To us may it be given to understand what an all-sufficient Saviour he is. May we feel that we need such a Saviour. To us may he be precious. May he be our life, our all. May we grow up unto him in all things.

We pray especially, O Lord, that thou wouldst have mercy on those now before thee who have publicly acknowledged their guilt, and expressed contrition for their sins. Open their ears to discipline, and seal instruction upon them. Make them willing to cast away all their transgressions whereby they have transgressed, that so their iniquities may not be their ruin. May they walk no longer after the flesh to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but grant that they may crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. May the time past of their lives suffice to have lived to themselves, and to have served their own lusts and pleasures. May the vices of their minds, and the disorders of their lives, be effectually corrected and subdued.

We humbly beseech thee, O Lord, to give them repentance unto life that needeth not to be repented of, that genuine sorrow for sin which flows from a sense of thy pardoning mercy, and will be productive of fruits meet for repentance, that so they may receive the promise of forgiveness which thy gospel holds out unto them, and walk before thee as pardoned sinners. Guide their feet into the way of peace ; preserve them from the paths of the destroyer ; keep them both outwardly in their bodies, and inwardly in their souls. Lead them by the right hand of thy righteousness, defend them with the right arm of thy power, and strengthen them in the path of duty, that they may serve thee without fear in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives.

Hear us, most merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

THE BENEDICTION.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all. Amen.

In cases of antenuptial fornication, the parties are very generally rebuked and restored to church-privileges on one appearance. In other cases of scandalous offences, the mode of procedure is different. See "The Form of Process in the Judicatories of the Church of Scotland, with relation to Scandals and Censures." Act xi., Ass. 1707, cap. ii. and vi.

PUBLIC SERVICE
OF
THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

FORENOON.

PSALM IX. 7-12.

MORNING PRAYER.

O LORD thou art our God, early will we seek thee ; thou art our fathers' God, and we will exalt thy name. We rejoice, O Lord, that though thou art worshipped by thousands of angels—though ten thousand times ten thousand ministering spirits continually stand before thee—though the whole universe send forth one harmonious song of praise unto thee the great Original—yet thou art still accessible to the humblest of thy sincere worshippers among the sons of men ; thine ear is still open to their cry, and thy hands are spread out all the day to a rebellious people. Truly, O Lord, thy ways are past finding out, thy greatness is unsearchable, thy goodness is infinite, thy tender mercies are over all thy other works.

We rejoice, O Lord, that although thou art incompre-

hensible by us as to thy essential perfections, yet thou hast revealed thyself in thy Word, in the most endearing characters as our Creator, our Preserver, and our bountiful Benefactor; as a God of spotless holiness, as an avenger of transgressors, and yet as slow to anger, unwilling to punish, and delighting in mercy.

We adore thee that we have shared so liberally of thy bounty, and experienced so much of thy mercy. From the moment that we were brought into existence, our lives have been at thy disposal, and our days and years have been prolonged only because thy goodness has never been withheld. We have not only shared the ordinary gifts of thy providence, but we have individually received special blessings, and experienced signal instances of thy fatherly protection. We have not only been guided safely along the smooth and easy paths of life, but we have been supported and upheld in the rugged and dangerous steps of our journey.

By thy good hand around us we have escaped a thousand snares, and been preserved from numberless dangers, even when we were unconscious of the power that protected us.

But all thy other blessings, O Lord, however great or numerous, and however deserving of our gratitude and praise, are infinitely surpassed by that astonishing display of thy love which thou hast given us in Jesus Christ. When we, O Lord, look up into the heavens which thy fingers have framed, when we contemplate thee arrayed in majesty, seated in glory, of thyself infinitely happy, and independent of us or of our services, then we are forced to say, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou shouldst visit him? We feel that even in our best state we are altogether vanity.

But in our fallen condition, alienated from thee in our hearts, rebels against thy authority, despisers of thy mercy, we are filled with wonder and astonishment that we should ever have been the objects of thy regard, far less that thou shouldst have thought of restoring us to that state from which we had fallen, and of making us for ever happy in the enjoyment of thyself. Nay, that our redemption should have been accomplished even by the death of thy only-begotten and well-beloved Son. When we, O Lord, allow our minds to dwell on the inconceivable price which has been paid for our redemption—when we consider how precious our souls must appear in thy sight, we are overwhelmed with the thought of our ingratitude, and our lamentable blindness and unconcern for our own best interests. Although our Saviour has died that we might live, and although the offers of eternal bliss are daily pressed upon us—we with shame must acknowledge that we feel no true gratitude in our hearts to the most merciful Redeemer, as we ought to feel—we set no value, such as we ought, on the matchless blessings which he has purchased for us. Many of us live in open rebellion against thee—contemning the offers of mercy—heedless as to what shall become of us when the few years of our pilgrimage are at an end ; we live as if our souls and our bodies were for ever to sleep in the dust. We fervently pray, O Lord, that such of us as are in this unhappy condition may, by the powerful influences of thy Spirit, be roused from our fatal security. We know that it is nothing but thy almighty power and free grace that can quicken the dead soul and break the hard heart. We truly feel that the carnal mind is enmity against God, and that by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins. Let thy Spirit, O Lord, apply to us the benefits of that redemption which thou

hast wrought for us in Christ Jesus. May we, O Lord, have our understandings enlightened in the knowledge of Christ—may we be brought from darkness to light—from the power of sin and Satan to serve thee, the living and the true God—may our sins be pardoned for Christ's sake. We believe that by the works of the law no man can be justified, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. Not by works of righteousness, therefore, which we have done, but according to thy mercy, O Lord, do thou save us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, that we at last may be presented before thee holy and without blemish, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Send forth, O Lord, we pray thee, the Spirit of thy Son into our hearts, for we know that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

May all the powers of our mind and soul be renewed that we may be fitted for a holy life; for we are expressly told in thy Word, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

We adore thee, O Lord, for the high spiritual privileges and advantages which we enjoy. We bless thee for the institution and the regular return of the Christian Sabbath. May we ever welcome its return with joy, and enter upon the solemn duties of it with that preparation of heart which is becoming in those who place themselves in the immediate presence of the Most High, and present their addresses to the Majesty of heaven and of earth. Oh, we pray that, when we engage in thy service, we may do so with our whole hearts; that we may celebrate thy praise with unfeigned devotion; that we may express our thankfulness with grateful hearts; that we may confess our sins with deep contrition and with genuine repentance. May we implore

thy grace, truly feeling our need of it, and depending on its all-sufficiency for the supply of all our spiritual wants.

We pray that thou wouldst pour down upon all Christian assemblies this day thine abundant blessings. May it please thee to give unto them increase of grace to hear meekly thy word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. Thou hast graciously promised to be with thy ministering servants alway, even to the end of the world. We beseech thee, therefore, to endue plenteously with heavenly gifts such as shall this day minister in thy name. Enable them to preach with all earnestness and faithfulness as those who stand between the living and the dead, and watch for souls as those that must give an account.

Look in mercy, O Lord, on all who are confined from thy courts by personal or family affliction, and, by thy immediate teaching, make up to them the want of public ordinances. Pity the multitude who everywhere profane the holy Sabbath, and give them repentance to salvation. Assist us, gracious God, as we are severally to be employed in speaking and hearing from thy Word. Make thy grace sufficient for us, and perfect thy strength in our weakness. And all we ask is in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be glory for ever. Amen.

Read portions of Scripture from the Old and the New Testament.

PSALM XXIV. 7.

PRAYER.

O most glorious Lord God, thou art the hearer of prayer, and the Father of mercies. Thou knowest the

weakness of our nature, and how unable we are without thy grace to love and serve thee. May we be pardoned, accepted, and saved for the Redeemer's sake. He died that we might live and rest in him. We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst enable us to make it our constant aim to glorify thee, by obedience to thy laws, by submission to thy will, by observing thine ordinances, by acknowledging thee in all our ways, and by labouring to diffuse around us wisdom, purity, and peace.

Do thou, O blessed Jesus, who didst shed thy blood to save the souls of men, send forth the Holy Spirit to quicken and to heal us. Bestow upon us thy grace. May every sinful emotion and desire be mortified, and every grace of the new nature be strengthened and brought into exercise.

May the endeavours of thy people this day to serve thee be accompanied with thy blessing; and do thou grant thy favour and thine assistance to thy ministering servants. May we found our plea and our hope solely on thy mercy, and on the merits and intercession of thy dear Son, in whose name and words we say—

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

LECTURE OR SERMON.

PSALM XX. 1.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we would again approach the footstool of thy throne with holy reverence and confidence. We would come unto thee, through Jesus Christ, as children to a father, knowing that thou art both able and willing to bestow upon us whatever we may stand in need of, either for this life or that which is to come ; for the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry.

We pray, O Lord, that our sins may be all pardoned, and that we may be renewed in the whole man after the image of thee our God ; that we may never more sin against thee, but abound in every good word and work. In the whole of our conduct in life, we would set thee, the Lord, before us ; and because thou art at our right hand, we shall not be greatly moved.

We pray thee, O Lord, to give us more clear views of our own sinfulness and depravity, and also more deep impressions and more just conceptions of the spotless purity of thy nature. May we see what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against God, and may we, in every situation in life, be guarded and circumspect, lest we should forget thee and commit iniquity. We lament that wickedness and forgetfulness of God should so much prevail amongst us—that we should have more relish for the idle amusements and sinful pleasures of this transitory life, than for the pure exercises and sublime enjoyments of our holy religion. Cause us, O Lord, to remember that the religion which we profess requires us to be constantly exercised unto godliness, to be denied unto all ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world. May we remember the declaration of our Saviour, that “if any man will

come after me, he must take up his cross daily and follow me ; and whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Enable us, therefore, we beseech thee, to be ever ready to forsake every object, however dear to us, which in any manner interferes with our love and duty to thee.

We would take unto us the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day. We would have our loins girt about with truth, and have on the breastplate of righteousness, that the weapons of our warfare be not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan, casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

We pray, O Lord, that the preaching of thy Word may be rendered effectual for these purposes. May the means of grace never be aggravations of ruin. We know that Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is thou alone who givest the increase. May the word which we have this day preached have thy blessing to attend it. [Here take in the text.]

We pray that the time may speedily arrive when men in all lands shall join in one harmonious song of gratitude and praise unto thee for the astonishing displays of thy love thou hast given to the human race. Look down, O God, from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and glory a world lying in wickedness and sin, and in thy good time we pray thee to have mercy upon the work of thy hands. We rejoice in the declaration of our Lord, that his gospel shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto the nations. Hasten, therefore, the time, we beseech thee, when the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and when all flesh shall see it together.

We pray, O Lord, that we who are favoured with the gospel may be enabled by thy grace to improve our distinguished privileges. May we be grounded and settled in the faith, and be no more as children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive ; but, speaking the truth in love, may we grow up into him in all things which is the head, even Christ.

Bless the ministers of the gospel of all denominations with the spirit of their office. May they be faithful to their important trust in winning souls to Christ. We would offer up our prayers unto thee in behalf of thy Church which thou hast established in our land. May she be watered with the dew of heaven. Bless the ministers of our National Church. May they find that the way of the Lord is strength to the upright ; and may they, in pointing out the way of salvation to thy people, make the great High Priest of our profession their pattern and their guide.

Continue thy mercies, O Lord, to this guilty land, of which we are sinful members. We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst regard with thy favour our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria ; protect her person ; prosper her government ; and greatly enrich her with all spiritual and heavenly blessings. We pray also for the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the other members of the royal family. Surround the Queen's throne with the wise and faithful of the land, men fearing God and hating covetousness. Counsel the deliberations of Parliament, and direct them to such measures as may promote the public prosperity, and the domestic peace and happiness of this great empire. Bless all inferior rulers and magistrates. May they not wear the sword of justice in

vain. May they be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise and protection to those that do well. Bless the whole body of the people. May they be distinguished for their regard for religious principles and observances, for their respect and attachment to the institutions of their country, and for their social and domestic virtues.

Let a double portion of thy blessing descend upon this parish and congregation. May they learn to take up their cross and follow Christ—manifesting the same temper and spirit that was in Christ Jesus. Like him may they say in all trying circumstances, The cup which our Father hath given us, shall we not drink it?

Bless the young. Take them into the arms of thy mercy, and love and bless them. Teach them to love thee, to pray to thee, and to serve thee.

Look in mercy, O Lord, on the sons and daughters of affliction. When thou afflictest with the one hand, do thou uphold and comfort with the other. Comfort those who mourn the loss of departed friends. Prepare the dying for death. Pity, Lord, the poor and the needy; do thou supply their wants, and teach them resignation to thy righteous dispensations. Prepare us all for whatever thou art preparing for us.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the abundant supply of food with which thou hast stored our land. We pray that thou wouldst send such weather as thou knowest to be necessary for preparing the earth to receive the precious seed, that there may still be plenty of provisions for man and for beast—on thy goodness all our trust depends.

We pray that thou wouldst assist us in what still remains of our duty. Enable us, in singing to thy praise, to offer the tribute of thankful hearts to thee. Dismiss us with thine own blessing. Be with us in the interval

of public worship. Come forth with us again in the after part of the day, and do thou thyself direct and assist us in the services in which we are then to engage. All that we ask is in the name and through the merits of Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

PSALM LXXXIV. 8.

THE BLESSING.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, abide with you, and with all the people of God, now and henceforth, even for evermore. Amen.

AFTERNOON.

PSALM CXIX. 169, 170, 175, 176.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we would look up unto thee as the Father of mercies, and the God of all hope and consolation. Thou art our Creator, and our Preserver, and Redeemer, and to thee alone should our homage and worship be paid.

With thee is the fountain of life—thou art the bestower of every blessing. From the place of thy habitation thou lookest upon all the inhabitants of this earth, thou knowest their wants, and by thy bounty they are fed.

Thou, O Lord, orderest and directest all events for the good of thy creatures. We are constantly receiving thy

blessings, without being sensible of the hand from which they flow.

Thou also orderest the lot of man ; thou makest poor and thou makest rich ; thou bringest low and thou liftest up. We believe that to be good for us which thy infinite wisdom and kindness allots for our portion.

But whilst we thus acknowledge thy kindness, manifested in the creation and preservation of man, we would with grateful hearts adore thee that thou hast also revealed thyself unto us as the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By our sins we had rendered ourselves liable to eternal death, but through him thou hast led us to hope that we shall inherit everlasting life, for we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. May we receive it as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save even the chief of sinners—that he is the way, the truth, and the life, and that no man cometh unto the Father but by him.

Eternal thanks be unto God the Father, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, that he hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son. Surely, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh ; justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory.

We adore thee, O Lord, for the abundant evidence which thou hast afforded us that Jesus really was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world. We bless thee that thou didst bear him witness by signs and wonders and divers miracles—that by him the blind received their sight, the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and

the poor had the gospel preached unto them. Surely, well may we upon such evidence say with the centurion, Truly this was the Son of God, for none could do these miracles which he did, except God were with him.

May our faith in him, built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, be firm and unshaken. May we receive him in all his offices as he is set forth to us in the gospel.

May we not only believe that he died for our sins, the just for the unjust, but that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures, and that he is now exalted by thy right hand, a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins.

Believing in him, we would joyfully say, If the blood of bulls and of goats sanctified to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge our consciences from dead works, that the peace of God may rule in our hearts !

But while we believe that we are redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, may we also believe, and in our practice evince, that we are influenced by the belief that Jesus came not only to make atonement for our past sins, but also to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. May we, therefore, not only have a firm faith in Jesus, but may the same mind be in us which was also in him. May we be holy as he is holy, and purify ourselves as he is pure.

May we ever remember, that the same God who has enjoined us to walk humbly with him, has also required of us to do justly, and to love mercy.

Oh, grant us the influences of thy Holy Spirit, to renew right spirits within us, and to keep us continually in the way of thy commandments. May he rule in our souls, and lead us in all truth, and purify our hearts from every evil affection and sinful desire.

May we, O Lord, be enabled to conduct ourselves as the children of the light and of the day. May we walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. May we never allow any temptation, however strong, to distract our attention from our duty and obedience to thee our God. May we neither so value the smiles nor fear the frowns of the world as to be in the smallest degree influenced by them with regard to our spiritual concerns. But may we esteem the approbation of Heaven and of a good conscience as the most desirable, as it is the most substantial and most satisfactory of all enjoyments.

We would desire, O Lord, this day to thank thee for all the means of grace and the ordinances of Divine appointment which we enjoy. Great and manifold are our blessings. Do thou enable us to improve them aright, to thy glory and the good of our souls.

O Lord, enable us to love the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth, and be ever ready to worship thee in thy sanctuary, and praise thee in the assembly of thy saints.

We thank thee, O Lord, for thy goodness to us on the former part of this thy day, and we pray that the services in which we were then engaged may be sanctified to our souls.

We pray thee to incline the hearts of all thy people to give the most serious attention to the gospel of Christ. Make them to see that it is a subject about which they cannot with safety remain indifferent; for it will either

wound or heal—be a savour of life or of death—a source of endless comfort, or the occasion of aggravated condemnation to all who hear it. Oh, make us all to see that to receive it is to receive the earnest and assurance of eternal happiness ; and to reject it or remain wilfully ignorant of its character and properties, will leave the soul oppressed with guilt, and exposed to the wrath of God for ever.

Go forth, we pray thee, O Lord, this day with the preaching of the gospel. Let it not return unto thee void, but may it accomplish the good purpose for which thou dost send it. Let thy presence and blessing be with us as we are now to be employed in speaking and hearing from thy Word. May we speak as it becomes thine oracles to be spoken, and do thou accompany thy word with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and may all our services be accepted and blessed, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Read a portion of Scripture from the Old and the New Testament.

PSALM LXVIII. 18-21.

SERMON.

PARAPHRASE LVI. 1-5.

PRAYER.

Accompany, we pray thee, O Lord, the preaching of thy word with an abundant and effectual blessing. May it have been listened to, not as the word of man, but as the word of God ; and may it have been felt by the heart and conscience to be quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword—profitable for doctrine, for

reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness. May all the precepts and institutions of thy Word have the blessed effect of making us feel the necessity of constantly conversing with thee in the acts of devotion ; and may our souls ever delight in honouring thee. [Here take in text.]

We humble ourselves before thee, O Lord. We have sinned against light and knowledge, against mercies and warnings, against providences and opportunities of good. We desire not to justify ourselves, but to confess before thee that we are utterly unclean. Guilty, and weak, and helpless as we are, it is our comfort, yea, our unspeakable joy, that with thee there is plenteous redemption. May we despair of safety but through the atoning death and the all-perfect righteousness of the Lamb of God, who gave himself for us a sacrifice and offering of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. May our view of the cross of Christ lead us to deep repentance and faith unfeigned, and fill our souls with hope and consolation, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Accept, we beseech thee, gracious God, the thanksgivings of our hearts for all thy past goodness. We give thee thanks for all thy mercies.

We pray, O Lord, that wherever the gospel has not yet been proclaimed may its glad tidings be made known and accepted, and may all walk in its light, and be sanctified, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same.

Let those who have gone forth to preach the gospel in distant and heathen lands be assisted and comforted by thee in all their labours of love, and under all their trials and privations, their disappointments, their fears, and their sorrows. Let the love of God dwell in their hearts ; and let the pleasure of the Lord prosper in their hands.

Bless the ministers of the gospel in our own land ; strengthen their hands, encourage their hearts, and grant abundant and increasing success to their labours.

Bless abundantly that portion of thy Church which thou hast established amongst us. Endue her ministers with the gifts and graces of thy Spirit, and enable them faithfully and in simplicity to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. May her people lead a life of love to thee their God—for love is the fulfilling of the law, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Bless our native land, the united kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, and the dominions and colonies connected therewith. Give a check to all profaneness, that presumptuous sinners may be ashamed, and that the wickedness of the wicked may come to an end. Avert from us, O Lord, those judgments which we feel or fear, and continue to us the many temporal and spiritual advantages which, through thy favour, we enjoy.

Especially do thou bless our sovereign, Queen Victoria. Enrich her with thy choicest blessings. May her throne be established in righteousness. May her reign be long and prosperous, and may she at last receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away. Bless the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the Royal family. May they be adorned with all the graces and virtues which become their exalted station.

We pray for the counsellors and ministers who surround the throne, and watch over the public interests. Give them the wisdom which is profitable to direct, and the integrity which looks only to the right discharge of duty. Preside in the high courts of Parliament, and direct all the deliberations and measures of our senators for thy glory, and the welfare of the nation.

Bless this parish and congregation. Give them grace

to value and improve their privileges. Send thy good Spirit to direct and guide them in the ways and works of godliness. Teach them how to pray, and how to hear, and read, and profit by thy holy word.

We entreat thee, O Lord, to be very gracious to the young. Clothe them with the graces of thy Holy Spirit. Endue them with the dispositions and impart to them the character of thy children.

We, O Lord, would intercede with thee in behalf of the person who has now been recommended to our prayers. If it be consistent with thy will, O Lord, may his life be prolonged and his health restored. Thou canst ransom thy people from the power of the grave, and redeem them from death. But if his sickness be unto death, we pray that he may be prepared to meet it divested of its terrors. Do thou guide him through the dark valley, and he shall fear no evil. Prepare him, O Lord, for whatever thou hast purposed concerning him.

Visit the afflicted and distressed with all the consolations of thy grace ; and sanctify all their trials, that they may be benefited thereby. Comfort those who mourn the loss of departed friends. Prepare the dying for death.

Pity, Lord, the poor and the needy. Do thou supply their wants, and teach them resignation to thy righteous dispensations. Prepare us all for our latter end.

Assist us in singing to thy praise. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Enable us to spend the remainder of this day in thy fear and in thy service. Hear these our prayers for Christ's sake. Amen.

PARAPHRASE XLVIII. 1-5.

THE BLESSING.

May the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the blessed Spirit, remain with you all, now, and for ever. Amen.

AN ADDRESS

When intimating the time the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is to be dispensed, which is generally three weeks before it takes place :—

I. Intimation.—The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is, God willing, to be dispensed in this place this day —, being the — day of —.

As you have now the near prospect of celebrating the Lord's Supper, it is your duty and interest to prepare for it; and no preparation can be of more importance than a right knowledge of the end and design of that solemn ordinance, and the qualifications necessary in those that would worthily partake of it.

The Lord's Supper is a federal feast, or feast of covenant between God and man, instituted by Christ himself, and perpetually to be observed by all Christians. Those who in obedience to Christ's command partake of bread and wine, in commemoration of his body given, and his blood shed for them, acknowledge Christ to be their Saviour and Redeemer, Lord and Master, and God grants and confirms to them, under the symbols of bread and wine, the body and blood of his Son, Christ Jesus; that is, all the blessed effects of his body broken, and his blood shed—which are pardon of past sins, promise of eternal happiness upon future obedience of the gospel,

and grace to direct and enable them to perform this obedience.

To be prepared for meeting with Christ in the sacrament of the Supper, you must firmly believe the whole doctrine concerning Christ, his incarnation, his birth, life, and death, his resurrection, ascension, intercession, and coming again to judge the world at the last day. You must yield an unshaken assent to the truth, that Jesus came into the world to save sinners, and that there is no salvation in any other ; no other name under heaven given among men, whereby you can be saved. You must believe that he is the great prophet and teacher of the Church, by whom God did make the most perfect revelation of his will, and of the way of life and salvation. You must believe that he, as priest, did satisfy the justice of God, and make an atonement for our sins, by the sacrifice of himself ; that he did perfectly obey the whole law, and did merit the pardon of your sins, and purchase temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings for all such as do truly repent and believe his gospel ; and that he lives for ever to make intercession for you. You must, however, believe that he is the Lord and Lawgiver of the Church, King of nations, and King of saints ; that all power is given unto him in heaven and on earth ; that he has sovereign authority over all persons and things ; that it is his undoubted right to reign over you, to rule and govern you by his laws and spirit ; and that he is appointed of God to be the judge of the quick and dead, before whose judgment-seat you must all appear, that you may receive according to the deeds you have done in the body, whether good or evil. These are some of the essential truths which you are to believe concerning Christ, in order to be prepared for coming to his table ; but you must by no means satisfy

yourselves with a speculative knowledge of these things. You must not think it enough that you do give an assent to the truth of the gospel. The assent of the mind to the truth of the gospel is absolutely necessary, but it is not enough ; there must be something more than this to make it a true and saving faith, even the consent of the will to the terms of the gospel. If you expect to be saved by Christ, you must receive him in all his offices, as the gospel offers him unto you. You must flee to his righteousness, and bow to his sceptre ; you must trust to his satisfaction, and rely upon his merits for the pardon of your sins, and a title to the favour of God and to life eternal ; and you must also submit to his government, and yield a willing obedience to his laws, devoting yourselves to him, to be his for ever, in opposition to the world, the flesh, and the devil, and performing all your duties to God and man in his strength, looking for the acceptance of your persons and works only upon his account. In a word, you must shew your faith by your works, and make it appear that you do indeed believe the doctrines and the promises of Christ, by your obedience to his commands ; that faith will never save you which is not fruitful in good works.


If you would be prepared for a communion table, you must sincerely repent of all your sins. Repentance towards God is no less necessary than faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Without repentance you are unfit to join in any of God's ordinances. You must mourn for and turn from your sins. You must confess and forsake your sins. The first act of return to God is an act of repentance. It is sorrow for sin. This sorrow for sin is the first operation of the Spirit of grace in recovering you to himself. You cannot otherwise return to God than by repenting ; you have gone astray, you will

never be restored, you will never be reconciled, but in the spirit of godly sorrow for sin. True repentance springs from a living faith in the mercy of God as displayed in the mediation of Christ; it is the melting of the heart in genuine sorrow, on account of having displeased the God of love; and its language is that of the returning prodigal, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." It is peculiarly suitable to the service in which you are about to be engaged, where all Christ's sufferings are displayed, and all his love is caused to pass before you. It is accompanied with sincere and firm resolutions to have respect to all God's commandments, and it adopts with pleasure the words of the Psalmist, "Oh, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day."

If you would be prepared for coming to the table of the Lord, you must live a holy life. That faith is not a living faith which does not purify the heart and reform the life; neither is that repentance of any value which is not attended or followed with amendment, or an actual forsaking of your sins, a ceasing to do evil, and a learning to do well.

You have not the love of God in you if you do not delight to converse with him in his ordinances. God has been so condescending as to represent his ordinances as so many places of interview for his people, where they meet with him, or, in the Scripture phrase, draw near to him, appear before him, and carry on a spiritual intercourse with him. Hence it is that they delight in his ordinances—that they love to pray, to hear, to meditate, to commemorate the death of Christ, and to draw near to the throne of grace in all the ways in which it is accessible. These appear to them not only duties but privi-

leges ; exalted and delightful privileges, which sweeten their pilgrimage through this wilderness, and sometimes transform it into a paradise. Now, will your love stand this test ? Have you found it good to draw near to God in the holy sacrament of the supper ? Or are you averse to it ? How, then, can you pretend that the love of God dwells in you ? What ! Can you love him, and yet be so averse to serve him ; so alienated from him, and have no pleasure in drawing near to him, and conversing with him ? This is contrary to the prevailing temper of every true lover of God. Every true lover of God is of the same spirit with David, who, in his banishment from the house of God, cries out in this affecting strain, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, the living God. When shall I come and appear before God ?" This is certainly your temper, if his love dwell in you. Examine yourselves, then, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves. Self-examination is absolutely necessary before coming to the table of the Lord. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." Seek grace from God to be faithful in the performance of this important duty. Often examine your hearts ; exercise yourselves unto godliness ; make religion your business ; eye the Word of God as your rule, and the example of Christ as your pattern. "As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "Be ye followers of God as dear children." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."



AN ADDRESS

When intimating the appointment of a Fast-day, preparatory to the dispensing of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper :—

It is now my duty to intimate to you, that it is intended, God willing, to observe Thursday next as a day of humiliation, self-inquiry, and prayer, within the bounds of this parish, preparatory to the administration of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which we have in view next Lord's day.

The holy sacrament of our Lord's Supper may be viewed in two very different aspects. To those who worthily partake of it, it is a mystery of love, a sacred ordinance in which Christ dispenses spiritual gifts and graces, and renewed assurances of God's pardoning mercy and special love. But to those who communicate unwarrantably, the Lord's Supper is a mystery of death, which aggravates their condemnation by adding to the number of their former sins, the abuse of this ordinance, the profanation of the sacred symbols of Christ's body and blood. It must, therefore, be of great importance for you to know whether or not you be prepared for celebrating this holy ordinance. It is your duty to examine yourselves in the fear of God, to review your past lives, to reflect upon your evil ways, to be humbled for them, to abandon them, and with full purpose of heart to return unto the Lord. And if you thus resolve, and resolve effectually, you have some reason to believe that you will worthily and advantageously commemorate the dying love of your Redeemer.

By the participation of this supper you profess your

value and esteem for Christ crucified, shewing that you are not ashamed of his cross, but that your dependence and confidence in God's favour is through his mediation and sacrifice ; that you receive it as a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. The fountains of life, and the wells of salvation are here opened unto you, and you are called upon to draw water with joy.

I would have you to keep in mind that you must not carelessly or without due consideration partake of this ordinance, for that is contrary to its nature, and deprives you of the desired benefits. Those who would observe this ordinance to the glory of God and to their own spiritual advantage, must examine themselves thoroughly, impartially, and as under the inspection of him who searches all hearts, as to their principles, views, feelings, and ends. In this manner you must search your hearts and try your ways, that you may not expose yourselves to the danger they incur who approach a communion table under false impressions of their state and character, and who dishonour the Redeemer by heartless homage or gross delusion.


I hesitate not to affirm that Jesus Christ hath nothing for you if you have nothing for him ; I do not mean of merit or righteousness to recommend you to his acceptance ; but I mean if you have no holy desires, no faith, no love, no confidence in him. The Holy Spirit hath nothing for you if you are not convinced of the necessity, and worth, and excellence of his grace, and of the utility of prayer in order to obtain it. The Father hath nothing for you if you have no esteem for the blessings which he offers you, for the gift of his Son, the gift of his Spirit, and for heaven and eternal happiness. The Saviour hath nothing

for you if you regard his religion as unnecessary, his promises as uncertain, his obedience and death as not needful for your salvation, the preaching of his Word as useless, and the holy sacraments as vain ceremonies. The Lord's Supper will administer to you no consolation, will communicate to you no grace nor promote your sanctification, if you partake of it only in compliance with custom, or to be seen of men, and without pious and devout dispositions of heart. Without holy desires, without spiritual hunger and thirst, you will find no pleasure in the exercises of a communion table, no agreeable relish in the bread of life which is there presented. Without a sense of sin, there is no joy in pardon ; without a love of holiness, there is no delight in the gift of the sanctifying Spirit. You must, therefore, have a high esteem of Divine blessings, you must know something of the worth and value of Christ's salvation, if you warrantably hope to be fed and comforted at his table.

And in order to excite holy affections and dispositions of soul, you must impartially examine your consciences ; you must with grief and sorrow reflect upon your sins, upon their number, their circumstances, their guilt and aggravations, and resolve for the future to keep the commandments of your God. Feeble as you are, you must strive to shake off the galling fetters of corrupt lusts and habits, humbly depending for success on the effectual assistance of promised grace. Renouncing all confidence in your own strength, regard yourselves such as you really are, as wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

After your frequent experience of the vanity and deceitfulness of the proffers of this world, do not imagine that you will find these more solid and satisfying than

you have seen them heretofore. The world hath often promised you refreshment, but it hath always deceived you ; another source, other waters are necessary to quench your thirst for felicity. It is in the grace of Christ and the favour of God only that you can find the full supply of all your spiritual wants. Are your souls cast down and disquieted within you because of your iniquities, and can you find no rest till you be interested in the blessings which your Saviour hath procured and promised ; till you obtain justification through his blood, till you have some ground to believe that your peace is made with God, that your sanctification is begun and advancing, and that the Spirit of God beareth witness with your spirit that you are his children ? Then trust, brethren, and be not afraid, for in such a frame of mind, and with such desires glowing in your bosoms, you shall never perish. Are ye hungry ? Come to the table of the Lord, and there ye shall find the bread of life, the heavenly manna, the meat that endureth unto everlasting life. Are ye thirsty ? Come ye to the waters, the living waters of the sanctuary, the blood of Christ shed for the remission of your sins, the sign of which is soon to be presented before you eyes. God will not disappoint your sincere though weak desires. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. Let those, then, who have complied with the gospel invitation and thankfully accepted of the Lord Jesus Christ, take comfort from what has been said on this subject and approach the table of the Lord, praying him to bestow upon you a new heart and new spirit, and the effectual assistance of his grace to enable you to perform your vows and engagements, to subdue the corruptions of your hearts, and to carry you forward in the way of holiness to immortal glory. And



may the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

COMMUNION SERVICE.

FAST-DAY—FORENOON.

PSALM CXXX.

PRAYER.

O THOU who dwellest on high, whose name alone is Jehovah, we, thy dependent creatures, would approach the footstool of thy throne, and through Jesus Christ, our great Mediator, offer unto thee the homage which thy unbounded goodness demands, which the best feelings of our nature dictate, and which thou in thy great mercy hast graciously promised to accept.

Thou, O Lord, art infinite in every perfection—thy glory is inconceivable—the greatness of thine excellency none can understand—angels and archangels continually minister before thee—cherubim and seraphim surround thy throne. The universe itself is thy temple—the objects which adorn it, and the creatures which inhabit it, are equally the objects of thy creative power and of thy providential care ; at thy command they came into existence, and to execute thy pleasure they are upheld in being—

all thy works, O Lord, praise thee, all thy saints bless thee.

When we, O Lord, contemplate the glorious perfections of thy nature, we are lost in wonder and astonishment that thy delights should ever have been with the children of men.

We know that thou art altogether holy, that evil cannot dwell in thy sight—that when angels rebelled thou didst banish them from thy presence, and didst leave them to suffer the punishment which their presumptuous conduct had merited. How, then, shall we admire and adore thy great mercy manifested unto the sinful children of men? When man originally transgressed, instead of executing upon him the punishment which thou hadst threatened, and which his disobedience had justly deserved—thou didst view him with an eye of pity—thou didst lay help upon one who was mighty—thou sparedst not thine own Son, but according to thy eternal purpose which thou didst purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord, didst determine to give him for a covenant of the people, that he might in due time restore the preserved of Israel, that he might be a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and thy salvation to the ends of the earth.

We adore thee that we have heard the good tidings of great joy which thou didst speak by the mouth of all thy holy prophets, and more particularly by thy angel at the birth of Jesus, when he did say, “that unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” We adore thee for the heavenly doctrines which Jesus taught—for the incontestable miracles which he wrought, and for the exemplary life which he led. We are sensible, O Lord, that if any of us have not the knowledge of God, it is our shame, for all may know the Lord from the least to the greatest; the only-begotten

Son, who is in the bosom of the Father; he hath declared him.

We adore thee for the adequate atonement and complete redemption which Christ accomplished for his people by his sufferings and death. We know that the wages of sin is death—that the soul that sinneth it shall die. We rejoice, therefore, that through Jesus Christ thou hast magnified thy mercy—that on him thou hast laid the iniquity of us all—that he bore our sins on his own body on the cross—that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities—that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed—that as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous; and as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all unto justification of life.

We rejoice, O Lord, that Jesus has declared himself to be the resurrection and the life—for if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain, and we are still in our sins; and we know that it behoved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, that repentance and remission of sin might be preached in his name among all nations.

Having so great a High Priest—having such great and precious promises—having such glorious and distinguished privileges—having such hopes and such prospects, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness? We lament that we should be so insensible to thy goodness—that we should set so little value upon our privileges—and that the hopes of heaven should have so little influence upon our hearts and lives. With shame we must confess that we hear the tidings of mercy with God, and the offers of pardon for our sins

through Jesus Christ, with as much indifference as if we had no offences to be removed, no guilt to be expiated. We are as careless in studying the Scriptures, and in our attendance upon the ordinances of the religion of Christ, as if we had no interest in the truths of revelation—as if we stood in no need of being warned to flee from the wrath to come. We are as heedless about the state of our souls and the life to come, as if the day of our death were to be the termination of our existence, and as if there were neither rewards nor sufferings to be experienced by us beyond the present life.

Lord, we pray that whatever may have been the conduct of any of us in the times that are past, that henceforward we may be enabled, by thy grace, to live as it becomes thy redeemed people. May all our sins be forgiven, and may our inclinations to evil be wholly subdued. May thy will, as revealed in thy Word, be our constant study; and may it be the chief object of our lives to yield obedience to it. May we be made to see and to receive the truth as it is in Jesus; and knowing the truth, may we have an unshaken faith in it; and being grounded and settled in the faith, may we bring forth fruit unto holiness.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the near prospect which, in the course of thy providence, thou art affording thy people in this place of commemorating the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. Do thou assist them in their preparation for the solemn service of a communion Sabbath. And do thou grant that on this day, set apart for humiliation, self-inquiry, and prayer, they may enjoy the presence and aids of thy Holy Spirit. May they humble themselves before thee in sincerity of heart; and do thou mercifully forgive all their sins. May they be enabled, by thy grace, to forsake their evil ways, and to turn unto

the Lord by a true and unfeigned repentance. Give them all the graces and qualifications which thou knowest to be necessary to fit and prepare them for appearing at thy holy table. Do thou, who art calling and inviting them to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, clothe them with the wedding garment. Good Lord, pardon every one that prepareth his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

We pray that thou wouldst bless unto us all the means of grace which we enjoy. Go forth, we pray thee, O Lord, this day with the preaching of the gospel—everywhere let its power be felt. Give also a door of utterance to speak thy truth; give the hearing ear and the understanding heart. May all our services be accepted and blessed for Christ's sake. Amen.

Read portions of Scripture from the Old and the New Testament.

PSALM LI.

PRAYER.

SERMON.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we again present ourselves before thee as the Hearer of prayer, and we pray that all the ordinances of thy grace may be blessed for our spiritual improvement and growth in grace. May the instructions which have at this time been delivered, and the prayers and the praises which have been offered up in thy sanctuary, have a tendency, through thy grace in Christ Jesus, to

improve us in the knowledge of thy will and our duty, to draw down thy blessing upon us, and to prepare us for the exercises and employments of thy glorious Church above.

Thou, O Lord, hast given us privileges of the most distinguished kind; but, alas! thou knowest that we neither value nor improve them as we ought. We, O Lord, must acknowledge that thy Word, which we have heard preached and read, has often been to us as the seed which fell by the wayside, or into stony places, or amongst thorns, which either the wicked one, or the trials of life, or the deceitfulness of riches, hath taken away, or withered, or choked, and rendered unfruitful. We have often seemed to hear thy Word with joy, but our fruit has not been unto holiness.

We have not been at sufficient pains to ascertain what is meant by the faith of the gospel, nor have we been sufficiently anxious to attain unto it. Neither have we understood, nor sought to understand as we ought, the spirituality and extent of the Divine law. We have persuaded ourselves that our faith has been genuine, when we have entertained a speculative belief in the truth of Scripture doctrine, while we have made little or no attempt to regulate our hearts and lives according to Scripture principles. Make us sensible, O Lord, that the Scriptures not only furnish us with proper subjects of belief, but that they exhibit to us the only infallible standard for regulating our practice. And may we be enabled, by thy grace, both to believe and to act as directed in thy Word. May we remember that it is only when we unceasingly endeavour to do so, that we act in such a manner as to deserve the name of Christians. And to this end may we, O Lord, be enabled to embrace the offers of salvation as they are held forth unto us in the gospel by

Jesus Christ thy Son. May we believe in him with all our hearts ; and believing, may our souls be saved. Accept of us, in thy beloved Son, sanctify us wholly, and freely forgive us all our transgressions, through the merits of our dear Redeemer.

May those invaluable privileges which we possess soon be communicated to the whole human race. May all the kingdoms of the earth be brought to the knowledge and worship of thee, the only true God, and of Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent, whom to know is life eternal.

Bless all those who preach Jesus and the resurrection, of whatever name or denomination they may be. In an especial manner we pray for the Church which thou hast established in our land. Endue her ministers largely with spiritual gifts. May they preach with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven ; and may they be honoured instruments in thy hand in winning souls to Christ.

We pray for the British empire with all its colonies. Preserve to us, O God, our liberties and privileges ; teach us to value them ; help us to improve them, and enable us to walk worthy of them. We pray for all whom thou hast put in stations of authority and public trust. In an especial manner we pray for thy servant, our Sovereign, Queen Victoria. Graciously afford her the assistance she stands in need of for the discharge of the duties of her exalted station. May she be under the continual guidance of thy wisdom, and the care and protection of thy providence. Vouchsafe also thy special favour to the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family. May they all be enriched with the grace of the most High. May they cultivate those virtues which will render them ornaments to their stations, and blessings to the world.

We pray for the counsellors and ministers who sur-

round the throne, and watch over the public interests ; for the nobles and senators of the land ; for the judges and magistrates, and particularly for those who bear rule in this city ; and for the whole body of the inhabitants, that wisdom and knowledge may be the stability of our times, and the fear of the Lord our treasure. We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst preside in the high courts of Parliament, and that thou wouldst overrule all their deliberations for the public good. Dwell in this corner of thy vineyard. Bless this parish and congregation. May pure and undefiled religion flourish and abound more and more in it. Put thy fear in every heart, and establish thy worship in every family. Be especially gracious to those of them who have the prospect of partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. May they keep this feast which thou hast graciously provided, not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. May they have right views of its end and design. Oh, let the love of Christ be shed abroad in their hearts, that they may be filled with contrition for their offences against so gracious a God, that they may be enabled to rejoice in thy mercy, and that all their days they may glorify thee in their bodies, and in their spirits, which are thine. Deliver them from every evil way, and from every temptation to sin. Oh, give them true repentance and a living faith. Teach them to count all things but loss that they may win Christ, and partake of his salvation.

May the young, and those who shall for the first time approach the table of our blessed Redeemer, be prepared by thy grace and Spirit for making an acceptable surrender of themselves to thee. And grant that while they receive the outward and visible sign, their souls may delightfully feel the inward and spiritual grace.

Bless abundantly thy servant to whom thou hast committed the pastoral care of this people. Do thou enrich him with all heavenly and spiritual blessings. May he come forth on a day of high communion in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace, and dispense to this people the bread and the water of life.

Look down, O gracious Father, on all the sons and daughters of affliction ; mercifully regard them under the pressure of their troubles, and exercise thy pity and compassion towards them. Oh, sanctify thy fatherly correction to them. Prepare the dying for their last and great change. Comfort those who mourn the loss of departed relations. May they possess that resignation which calmly acquiesces in all the appointments of Divine Providence. Dispose us now to sing to thy praise with true devotion of heart. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Be with us in the interval of public worship. Come forth with us again in the after-part of the day, and with thy servant who is to deliver thy message to us, and do thou thyself direct and assist us in the services in which we are then to engage.

Incline thine ear to our requests, O Lord, and accept of us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

PARAPHRASE XXVI. 1-5.

BLESSING.

May grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

AFTERNOON SERVICE.

PSALM XXXII. 1-7.

PRAYER.

O most blessed, and most gracious God ! we approach thy presence with the most profound reverence, and the deepest sense of our unworthiness. Thou art almighty in power, thou art infinite in wisdom, thou art unbounded in goodness, thou art spotless in holiness, thou art inflexible in justice, thou art possessed of every possible perfection.

When we, O Lord, reflect on the dignity, the excellence, the majesty, and the purity of thy nature, and compare it with the meanness, the baseness, the impiety, and the wickedness of our lives, we are filled with astonishment that we should be allowed to exist in thy presence, to partake of thy bounty, and to have the offers of thy grace. We feel, O Lord, that we must appear vile in thy sight, that we must have forfeited thy favour, that we deserve to be visited with the effects of thy wrath. We feel, under the consciousness of our guilt, that instead of having confidence to present ourselves before thee, we ought to act like our first parent when he had transgressed, and endeavour to hide ourselves from thy presence. We feel that, clothed with our own righteousness, we cannot be justified in thy sight ; for in all our conduct we have acted in such a manner as to provoke thy wrath, and to offend thy holiness ; and wert thou to execute justice upon us, thou wouldst consign us to the abodes of wretchedness.

Convinced of this, therefore, O Lord, we now, with

sorrow and contrition, prostrate ourselves at the footstool of thy throne, and in the name of Jesus Christ, our great Mediator, acknowledge our transgressions, and supplicate thy mercy. We know that thou hast said, Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy. We acknowledge, therefore, O Lord, that we are guilty : may our sins be forgiven. Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed. For his sake, do thou pardon our offences, and restore us to thy favour. May we be made to see more clearly the evil and danger of sin ; and may we abhor it, and turn from it, both as it is offensive unto thee, and as it is productive of such misery to ourselves. May we not presume too much on thy goodness and forbearance, but may we remember that, although thou art long-suffering and slow to wrath, thou hast also said, that thou wilt by no means clear the guilty. May it be our chief concern, therefore, O Lord, to have our sins pardoned, and our guilt expiated.

We pray, O Lord, that, by thy grace, thou wouldst assist us in those duties which we of ourselves are so unable to discharge. Let us not by anything that is temporal be tempted to act in such a manner as to forfeit that happiness which is eternal. When we are tempted to desert our duty, may we consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, and who, though he was tempted in all things such as we are, yet he never sinned. Let us not walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful ; but may the law of the Lord be our delight. May we meditate upon it continually, and let it be a lamp to our feet, and a light to our path.

Prepare, O Lord, by thy grace, the people in this place for the solemnities of a Communion Sabbath. May

they have fellowship with thee in thine ordinances. Do thou, O Lord, who hast searched and known them, impart to them that knowledge of themselves which is needful to their acceptably, and profitably serving thee. Search them, O God, and know their hearts ; try them, and know their thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in them, and lead them in the way everlasting. Excite in them, O Lord, a continual distrust of themselves, and inspire them with a holy and steadfast dependence on thy grace and power. Give them penitent hearts, give them a simple reliance on thy free mercy, by faith in Christ. Give them a thankful remembrance of his sufferings, and his love ; a desire to shew forth his death, according to his appointment ; to profess their obligations to him, and to give themselves up to his service, that thereby they may have the preparation necessary for becoming acceptable guests at his holy table.

For enabling them so to act, do thou, O Lord, bless unto them the services in which they were engaged on the former part of the day. May they leave a sanctifying impression behind them, and may they experience the influence of ordinances which thou thyself hast appointed. May they through them learn what is the good and acceptable will of God ; and may they not only know the way of life, but walk therein.

Let thy presence, O Lord, be with us at this time. May we find it good to wait upon thee in thy house, and in thine ordinances. Be with us in the important duties we have to discharge. Give unto us the gifts and graces of thy Spirit ; and enable us to speak, because we believe ; and may the hearers of the gospel receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.

O Lord, hear and accept of these our humble supplications, for Christ's sake, and for his alone. Amèn.

Read a portion of Scripture from the Old and the New Testament.

PSALM XXXVIL 37-40.

SERMON.

PARAPHRASE XLVII. 1-4.

PRAYER.

Let us pray—

O most merciful Father, let thy word which has now been spoken have thy blessing to attend it, in so far as it has been agreeable to thy will. Oh, do thou, through the influences of thy grace, give to ministers and hearers a better understanding of, and a firmer faith in the doctrine of Christ crucified. May Jesus everywhere be preached with zeal and faithfulness, and may thy people ever account that the truest wisdom of words by which the cross may become the most efficacious. We adore that infinite mercy of thine by which thou didst make him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him; and that we might be saved by his merits, when we could not be saved by any merits of our own.

Oh, see, Lord, our sins punished in him, even in him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities; and as the chastisement of our peace was upon him, so let the merit of his righteousness be upon us, and by his stripes let all the diseases of our souls be healed.

Let us never be shaken in our faith of the gospel, and in our trust in the Redeemer, by that contempt which so many in our day are ever ready to pour upon the ordinances of the religion of Christ, but may we indeed feel it to be the power of God and the wisdom of God ; and may we remember that by the foolishness of preaching, men, in all ages of the Christian Church, have been brought into the way of salvation, have been taught savingly and to profit, and have been trained to a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.

May we esteem all other knowledge comparatively as foolish, till we have learned that our wisdom and righteousness, our sanctification and redemption, are in Christ, who of God is made all and in all to us. Help us to press forward in the way of life, and so to run that we may obtain the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus.

Most merciful God, we beseech thee to accept and bless all the means which have been used for the salvation of souls, for the spreading of the light of the glorious gospel in thy Church, and throughout the whole world. To those that sit in darkness, and in the region and shadow of death, may light spring up.

Be merciful to thy servants who have gone to heathen lands to preach the gospel, and bless them. Oh, may their labours of love prosper. May thy name be great over the whole earth, and thy kingdom rule over all.

We pray, O Lord, that thy Holy Spirit may be ever present with the ministers of thy word, to direct and strengthen and assist them in their important work. May all the churches avowing the sovereign Headship of the Redeemer be revived and extended. Establish a stronger foundation of principle and a higher standard of excellence among them.

We pray especially for that portion of thy Church

with which we are connected, that thou wouldst strengthen, purify, and extend it, and add to it daily such as shall be saved.

Bless our native land in all its interests, civil and sacred. May the national power and influence which thou hast bestowed on us be wisely and conscientiously employed to extend the knowledge of thee throughout the earth, and hasten the happy time when Jews and Gentiles shall all be found in the same sheepfold, and the great salvation shall be the great joy of all.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless our sovereign Queen Victoria; may she be guided and upheld by thy Holy Spirit, and may she at all times enjoy thy favour and blessing. Bless also the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the Royal Family. May they be partakers of all that is great and good, that, when earthly honours pass away, they may enjoy unfading glory in thy kingdom above.

Give wisdom and understanding to the counsellors that stand around the throne, and to our judges and senators, and all in power and public trust, the true spirit of their station and office.

Bless this parish and congregation. O Lord, pardon and deliver them from all their sins; confirm and strengthen them in all goodness. Endue them with all Christian graces. Graft in their hearts the love of thy name. Increase in them true religion. Prepare them for making an acceptable surrender of themselves to thee on a day of high communion. Prepare them for communion with thee at thy table, and grant that, over the memorials of the Redeemer's broken body and shed blood, they may renew their engagements to be his.

Bless abundantly thy servant to whom thou hast committed the pastoral care of this people. May thy Spirit

be poured out upon him. Supply him richly with thy grace, that he may minister to their souls. Bless him in his person, family, and flock.

Be thou the friend of our friends, and bountifully reward our benefactors. Forgive our enemies. Look in mercy on the young and inexperienced, and let them not be deceived and misled by the wiles of the wicked one, and of a world lying in wickedness. Give health to the sick, strength to the weak, comfort to the sad, repentance to the impenitent, faith to the unbelieving, and preparation for death to the dying. Make us sensible, O Lord, of our uncertain condition in this life, and teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Abundantly bless our provision. Satisfy our poor with bread. Continue unto us fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness. Accept of our thanksgivings, O Lord, for thy goodness to us. Be with us in singing to thy praise. Forgive our manifold offences, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PARAPHRASE XLV. 3-6.

THE BLESSING.

May grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be with you, and all the people of God, now, henceforth, even for evermore. Amen.

PREPARATION-DAY—AFTERNOON.

[ONLY ONE DIET.]

PSALM XXII. 23-27.

PRAYER BEFORE SERMON.

BLESSED and ever-glorious Lord God, we rejoice that we are not only permitted to approach into thy presence, but that thou hast desired us to address thee by the endearing epithet of Father. Thou, O Lord, art indeed our Father, and we are thy children. We are thine by creation, we are thine by providence ; but in these relations we are thine in common with all the other creatures which thou hast made. We, O Lord, are thine in a more endearing relation than that which any of thy other creatures can claim ; we are thine by redemption, we are thine by grace. Oh that we were enabled, upon good evidence, individually to say that we are thine also by regeneration and adoption ; that the love and the power of sin were subdued within us ; that we could go on through life adorned with the graces, and bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit !

We, O Lord, feel, and we pray that thou wouldst give us grace to feel more strongly, that our obligations unto thee as the children of men are infinitely greater than those of any other race of beings which thou hast formed.

Oh that we were enabled to form something like adequate conceptions of thy unparalleled love to us, and of the undeserved preference which thou hast given us to those angels who fell from their first estate, and even to those of our brethren of mankind from whom thou hast still concealed the glorious light of the gospel of Christ ! Oh that we were enabled not only to form a just estimate of our invaluable privileges, but that we were made in reality to feel the infinitude of the obligations under which we are laid to thee, and that grace were given us to banish from our minds every affection and every desire which can at all interfere with, or interrupt us in rendering unto thee the homage of our whole hearts, and the obedience of our whole lives ! Oh that we could constantly bear in mind our high destiny !

May we ever bear in mind that we are now, or should now be, training for a meetness for being admitted into thine effulgent presence, and for joining with angels and archangels, with cherubim and seraphim, and with all the companies of the redeemed, in giving praise to him who sits upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for evermore.

And may we ever most gratefully and affectionately remember that, in order to our being allowed to indulge such glorious anticipations, thy Divine love and thy Divine mercy were stretched to the uttermost, and that the richest gift which Heaven could bestow, the most costly sacrifice the universe could furnish, was willingly offered and graciously accepted ; that for the salvation of

fallen man, the only Son of the only true God suffered death, even the accursed death of the cross. Oh, the height and the depth, the breadth and the length of the love of God ; it passeth knowledge ! Surely greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend ; but God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for us.

Oh, let us not forget nor undervalue such love. Let us not abuse such goodness. May the infinite value of the ransom that was paid for our redemption convince us of the infinite guilt and misery from which we are redeemed, and of the infinite baseness of repeating those sins which occasioned such offence, and which called for such a sacrifice. Grant us grace, we beseech thee, to incline us to fall in with the plan of redemption through the blood of the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world. Cause us to be in bitterness for all the offences that we have committed against thee, the Lord of love, and Author of all our mercies. Oh, give us true repentance, that repentance unto life which is not to be repented of. Do thou, O Lord, by thy Spirit, begin and carry on a work of saving faith in our hearts, and perfect it by thy grace, in love and in mercy, for thy glory and our eternal happiness. May the life which we live in the flesh be by the faith of him who loved us and gave himself for us, and hath made us kings and priests unto God. Let us never consider ourselves Christians but as we resemble Christ. May our conformity to his principles, temper, and conduct become daily more and more apparent, both to ourselves and to others. Enable us to continue in his word, that we may be his disciples indeed, rooted and built up in him, and established in

the truth as we have been taught, and abounding therein with thanksgiving.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the ordinances of the gospel. We bless thee that these ordinances are regularly administered among us, and that, under the guidance of thy Spirit, we have the means of attaining, through the Scriptures, that wisdom which maketh wise unto salvation. We thank thee for the near prospect which thou art affording thy people in this parish of contemplating, by faith in the sacrament of the Supper, the sufferings and death of Christ. May they discern in them the surest grounds for confidence and hope towards God, and derive from them a divine influence for their consolation and improvement. May they regard in this ordinance Christ wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities; and may they feel assured that in him they have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

We pray that they may have the graces of faith, repentance, and love in vigorous and lively exercise, and thereby have life, light, and joy communicated to their souls.

We pray, O Lord, for thy countenance and blessing as we are now met in thy presence. May we speak because we believe, and may we hear to the saving of our souls. Forbid that any here present should remain uninterested in the blessings of the gospel. Forbid that they should reject the counsel of God against themselves, and judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life.

We will go forward in thy strength, making mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. Hear, O Lord, these our humble prayers, and accept of us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Read a portion of Scripture.

PARAPHRASE XLI. 3-6.

PRAYER.

SERMON.

PRAYER AFTER SERMON.

O Lord, what shall we render unto thee for all thy goodness? thou art daily loading us with thy benefits. With grateful hearts we would ever recollect, as the greatest of all earthly blessings, that we have been trained up in the knowledge of the Christian religion, and taught the way in which we ought to go. We were early devoted to thee by the most solemn engagement, and from our childhood we have been taught the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments which thou our God hast commanded.

May we therefore serve thee the Lord with fear; may our hearts stand in awe of thy word. May it be our study to do as thou hast commanded us—neither turning aside to the right hand nor to the left. May we commit our thoughts, ways, and works unto the Lord, that they may be established. May we keep the precepts of our Lord, that we may abide in his love. May we cast off and abhor the works of darkness. May we seek God and serve him with all our hearts. Knowing our own insufficiency to act in this manner, we gladly embrace the promises of thy aid and assistance which thou hast given in the gospel of thy Son. We believe that the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he alone holdeth up our goings in his paths, that our footsteps may not slide. We therefore rejoice that thou wast

pleased to say of old—"This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after these days, I will put my laws in their inward parts, and write them in their hearts; and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, that they may walk in my statutes and keep mine ordinances."

Animated by these declarations, we would now wait upon the Lord, that we may be sanctified through the truth, that we may be saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; that so the law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, may in due time make us free from the law of sin and death.

More especially since the day-spring from on high hath visited us by the appearance of Jesus Christ to guide our feet in the way of peace, and furnish us thoroughly unto all good works, we will now come unto him for grace and strength, that we may work out our salvation with hope and confidence, as well as with fear and trembling, knowing that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure. And being confident of this very thing, that he that hath begun a good work in us will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ, may we be found in Christ, who is all and in all.

Let us be washed in his blood. Let us be clothed with his righteousness. Let us be sanctified by his spirit. Thou, O Lord, art the glory of our strength, and through thy free, rich grace bring us at last where we shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where danger is no more to be feared, nor sorrow felt!

For accomplishing these objects we pray that thou wouldst help us to improve the means of grace with which we are favoured. May the word which we have now heard be, by thy blessing, the means of leading us

to attend more seriously to those things which belong to our everlasting peace. May we remember that we must answer unto thee for the use which we make of all the instructions which we receive. Let none of us who live in this Christian country deceive ourselves by supposing that ignorance may be pleaded as an excuse for our neglecting or acting contrary to the precepts of the gospel. But may we remember, if we remain ignorant under the light of the gospel, that our very ignorance is a crime, for which we must account unto thee. May we therefore be careful to have ourselves thoroughly instructed in the knowledge of the religion of Christ, by studying the Scriptures, by attending upon the preaching of the gospel, by meditating on the Word of God, and by praying for Divine aid to reduce thy laws into practice.

We pray, O Lord, that the predicted time may speedily come when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings, and illuminate the whole world; when the Gentiles shall come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising, and all Israel shall be saved.

Let the Reformed Churches be more and more reformed. Raise up more faithful ministers, who shall be the honoured instruments of bringing the people to choose thee with all their hearts, and to serve thee fully.

We would offer up our prayers unto thee in behalf of thy Church which thou hast established in our land. May she be enriched with thy grace, and watered with the dew of thy Holy Spirit. Bless the ministers of our National Church. May they be enabled faithfully and judiciously to point out the way of salvation to thy people, making the great High Priest of our profession their pattern and their guide.

We would desire, O Lord, to thank thee for all the

privileges, both sacred and civil, which we enjoy. May they be preserved and transmitted unimpaired to the latest posterity. Let not our ingratitude, we beseech thee, for thy blessings ever provoke thee to withdraw them from us ; but as a nation may we repent of the evil we have done, and do thou, O Lord, continue to be gracious to us.

We pray, O Lord, for our sovereign lady, Queen Victoria. Enrich her with thy choicest blessings ; sanctify her by thy grace, and defend her from all evil. Bless the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the members of the Royal Family. Bless the nobles and senators of the land. Preside, we beseech thee, in the high courts of Parliament. Make our judges just, and our exactors righteousness. Bless all inferior rulers, judges, and magistrates ; may they all be faithful to their trust, and instruments in thy hand for promoting the public good.

We pray, O Lord, for the inhabitants of this parish, and the members of this congregation. May they be blessed with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. May the very God of peace sanctify them wholly. Be especially gracious to those of them who intend tomorrow to testify their love and gratitude to the Saviour, in the ordinance of the Supper, for the rich and spiritual blessings which through him they have received. May they adore him who hath instituted, as with his dying breath, the holy solemnity of his Supper to be through all ages a memorial of his dying love, and a bond of that union which it is his sovereign pleasure that his people should preserve. Do thou, O Lord, give them grace to observe this ordinance to thy glory, and to their own spiritual advantage. Prepare, direct, and support them, that they may go to thy table to renew their covenant, and to take

the Lord Jesus Christ to be their Saviour, their strength and Redeemer, their only portion and inheritance for ever. Forbid that any should ignorantly and without due preparation come to this feast. Forbid that any should come without the wedding garment. Restrain the fears and remove the scruples of thy redeemed people. Do thou encourage the faint-hearted, and may the presumptuous and the self-confident be roused to a conviction of their guilt, to an apprehension of their danger, and let them, in penitence and faith, flee to that blood of the Lamb, which is the only refuge from his wrath. Prepare the hearts of the young for this solemn ordinance. Give them courage to vow unto the Lord, and strength to fulfil their vows. May they be made welcome guests. May they rely on him who is able and mighty to save. Do thou, O Lord, impart support and consolation to the aged, who are preparing once more to take into their hands the memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood. May thy never-failing mercy be their confidence and joy.

Be thou the strength and consolation of thy servant, the minister of this parish and congregation. May he be clothed with salvation. May he work the work of the Lord. May he save himself and those who hear him. May he minister abundantly to their souls of the word and bread of life.

Visit in mercy the sick and the afflicted. Do thou communicate to them the riches of thy grace and the consolations of thy Holy Spirit. Prepare the dying for their last and great change. Comfort those who mourn the loss of departed relatives. Help us, O Lord, to spend every day in the view of our last, and so as to fit us for it. Mercifully forgive, O God, the sins we have committed against thee since we met together in thy house of prayer. Be with us in singing thy praises. Dismiss

us with thy blessing. Conduct us in safety to our places of abode. Enable us to spend the remainder of this day in thy fear, and in searching our hearts and ways before thee. Hear us, we beseech thee, gracious God, and accept of us, and bless us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

PARAPHRASE XLVIII. 6-9.

FORM

For admitting Catechumens to the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper, used on the Saturday previous to the Communion Sabbath, immediately after the ordinary service is concluded.

Those young persons who propose to join with us, for the first time, in obeying the dying injunction of our Saviour, by partaking of the Lord's Supper, are now about to give a public profession of their faith, and of their solemn resolution to devote themselves henceforth to the service of their Divine Master.

You, my dear young friends, have "chosen that better part, which shall never be taken away from you." You come this day publicly to declare, that you have taken the God of your fathers to be your God—the Saviour of your fathers to be your Saviour—the hope, the confidence, the joy of your fathers, to be the only treasure of your souls. If these be indeed the sentiments with which you are animated, we do most sincerely congratulate you. In this hope, I now call upon you to make a public profession of your faith.

[The Catechumens here stand up.]

I. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only infallible rule of faith and practice ?

II. Do you acknowledge the doctrines therein contained concerning the being and perfections of God ; the guilt and depravity of human nature ; the divinity and atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ ; the personality and work of the Holy Spirit ; and the necessity of the regenerating and sanctifying operations of the Spirit on the hearts of men ?

III. Do you declare that, so far as you know your own hearts, you have cordially received the testimony of God concerning his Son ; that you are resting exclusively on the finished work of Christ, and the promise of God through him, for the salvation of your souls ; and that you love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, desiring to be regarded as his disciples, and to be found walking in all his commandments and ordinances blameless ?

IV. Is it your firm purpose, trusting in promised grace, to regulate all your conduct by the law of Christ, —carrying your religion into all the relations of life, and endeavouring to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things ?

All these doctrines you believe, and all these duties you do now promise, through Divine grace, to perform ?

[The Catechumens express their assent.]

I do now, in the presence of Almighty God, and before this assembly of his people, admit you to the high privilege of sitting down with your fellow-Christians at the table of your Saviour, that you may partake with them of that holy Supper which commemorates his sufferings and death, and from which believers, in all

ages, have received spiritual nourishment and growth in grace.

May Jesus be made known to you in the breaking of bread !

Blessed be God who has put into your hearts the desire to unite yourselves with those who believe in that Saviour who died for your sins, and rose again for your justification ! The Church of Christ rejoices to behold the accession of new members—your parents, your relations, your friends partake also, we would hope, in this joy. Their looks are turned towards you even now, and their hearts are silently outpoured on your behalf to the Author of all good. There is, however, my young friends, mingled with this prayer, a feeling of anxiety and fear for your future welfare, for your perseverance in the path you have just entered.

Your first care must be to acquire a deep sense of your own weakness and utter inability to do anything pleasing to God without his assistance ; and that you cannot have a hope of mercy but through the merits of your Saviour. You must likewise remember, that not a single action or prayer can be accepted but for his sake ; but, at the same time, the Scriptures teach you that abundant supplies of grace are promised to all those who are earnest in seeking for it. Two passages are particularly strong upon this subject ; your gracious Saviour says to his disciples, "Without me ye can do nothing ;" and again, Paul says, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me : " thus, whilst one passage teaches you your own weakness, the other instructs you where to apply for that strength which will enable you to overcome your evil inclinations, and to resist the temptations of the world. But merciful as are these promises of assistance, you must not deceive yourselves, for these promises of help,

though held out to all, can only be claimed by those who will strive to profit by them. You must remember, likewise, that though you cannot be saved by your own exertions, yet most assuredly you will not be saved without them. Nor must you rest satisfied with merely knowing and owning your dependence upon God ; you must endeavour to shew the effects of that knowledge and that profession, by leading a life more humble, more active, and more thankful. What cause for thankfulness, that the more you feel your own weakness the more assured may you be of assistance from that God who has said, "My strength is made perfect in weakness!"

And among the means which God in his goodness has placed within your reach, and the exercise of which he has promised to bless, there are three especially which the Saviour himself enjoins,—Search the Scriptures—Watch—Pray. Yes, dear friends, in all things "make your requests known unto God ;" "pray without ceasing." If you wish to persevere in the ways of God, if you hope to save your souls, pray—"Pray without ceasing"—"Search the Scriptures." Do not merely give them a cursory examination, but search them. Watch, for the devil, like a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour.

Pray for life. Pray for the life of the Son of God, which no sickness can threaten, and over which time and death have no power. Lift up your hearts, and pray more earnestly than for aught else, that you may live the life of Christ ; that you may be framed and supported by his divine doctrine ; that you may be inspired by his temper ; that you may imbibe the vitality of his faith and obedience. Possessed of the Son, by careful imitation and the assisting grace of God, you are possessed of life, of his life, which is life eternal, and you cannot die. Let

the same mind be in you that was in him, be animated with the same heavenly spirit, and seek, as he did, those things which are above, and you are already risen with him in the likeness of his resurrection, because his life is your life, and he dwells in you, and you dwell in him. Amen.

Let us pray—

O Lord, we desire to bless thee with our souls, and all that is within us, for having pitied us in our lost estate, and found out a ransom for us. What shall we render unto thee for all thy tender mercies? We will praise thee for ever, and shew forth thy mighty acts to the children of men; for thou hast dealt very bountifully with us.

May we see our guilty and hopeless state by nature,—how weak and wicked, how defiled and debased, how undeserving and offensive we are without an interest in Christ. Make us feel that, till washed in his blood of sprinkling, there is nothing but sinfulness in us; and till his Spirit takes possession of our hearts, our affections and imaginations are only evil continually. Look not upon us as we are in ourselves, but through the merits of that sacrifice which thine own dear Son hath upon the cross offered up; and may the curse denounced against us, as transgressors of thy holy precepts, be mercifully removed through the efficacy of his atonement who was made a curse for us. Oh, may we be pardoned, accepted, and saved, for the Redeemer's sake!

Do thou, O most merciful God, be gracious to the young in thy presence who have publicly professed their faith in the doctrines of the gospel, and their love to the Saviour. May they surrender themselves as first-fruits unto the Lord. Do thou prepare them for approaching

a communion table, that they may commemorate the death of their Redeemer with gratitude and love. Pardon their unworthiness, and give them grace to come before thee with deep humility and contrition of heart. Let them examine themselves, and so eat of that bread and drink of that cup. Let them pray diligently for thy Holy Spirit to direct and assist them in their inquiry as to the state of their souls. Confirm them in their pious resolution of thus devoting themselves to thee. Give them courage to vow unto the Lord, and strength to fulfil their vows. Thou art the living bread which came down from heaven ; so let them eat the bread at thy table, that it may be an effectual sign and means of grace, even of their receiving thee, the Bread of life, of which they may eat and live for ever. The shedding of thy blood cleanseth from all sin ; so let them drink of the fruit of the vine at thy table, that it may be the instrument and emblem of the purification of their souls. May they receive Christ as the life and salvation of their souls. Do thou dwell in them, and walk in them, and be their God, and make them thine for ever.

Accept of us, O Lord, for the sake of him whom thou hearest always, even Jesus Christ, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

BLESSING.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Ghost, remain with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for ever. Amen.

COMMUNION SABBATH.

PARAPHRASE XLI. 1-6.

PRAYER.

O LORD, we would approach unto thee as the Hearer of prayer with reverence and humility. And we pray thee to pour out upon us a spirit of grace and supplication. Thou, O Lord, hast promised to lend an ear unto the cry of the poor and needy who humbly trust in thy mercy. We would therefore come unto thee disclaiming all merit of our own, trusting entirely to thy grace and mercy which thou art manifesting unto a guilty world through Jesus Christ.

Although we are thy creatures, the workmanship of thy hands, and the sheep of thy pasture, we have withdrawn ourselves from thee—we have disowned thy authority—we have strayed from thy fold. Although thou didst plant us a noble vine, we have become the degenerate plants of a strange vine. We have forgotten thee the God who made us—we have lightly esteemed thee the rock of our salvation. Our sins have not only been those of infirmity and of casual occurrence, but we have been

guilty of presumptuous and flagrant transgressions of thy law. In thought, in word, and in deed, we have acted in such a manner as justly to offend thee. Our affections have been too much engrossed with temporal objects—we have been lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God—our conversation has been vain—our actions have been full of guilt—the whole head is sick—the whole heart is faint. We are unworthy to appear in thy sight, and in our own name we know that we dare not presume to ask any blessing ; nor for our own sake can we indulge a hope of seeing the light of thy reconciled countenance.

We come unto thee only in the name and relying on the merits of Jesus Christ thy beloved Son, in whom thou art ever well pleased. We rejoice that thy love to the world was so great that thou didst send thy Son into it, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. We, O Lord, believe in Christ, but we still have cause to pray, Lord, help our unbelief—for thou, O Lord, knowest that although we profess faith in the Redeemer, and look for salvation only through him—although we have been baptized in the name of Christ, and call ourselves Christians, we fall far short of the high character we assume. Our faith in Christ, alas ! is too weak to have that sanctifying and regenerating influence upon our hearts which it ought to produce. We profess to be his disciples, but thou, O Lord, knowest that we are not prepared as we ought to be to follow him both through good and through bad report. We are willing to perform those parts of our duty which require no sacrifice, and put us under no restraint ; but alas ! how unwilling and how ill-prepared are we for taking up our cross daily to follow thee !

Oh, convince us, we beseech thee, that till we love thee supremely—till we esteem thy loving-kindness to be

better than life, and thy favour than silver or gold—that our faith is lamentably deficient, that our conception of thy nature and character is unworthy and imperfect. And do thou, O Lord, by the irresistible influence of thy Spirit, bring every one of us to that state of mind and of feeling that we may be ready to leave all and follow thee. Oh, may we be made to see this world, to which we are so apt unduly to attach ourselves, in its true light. May we not vainly expect from it, what it is, in consequence of sin having entered into it, incapable of yielding—may we look for happiness only in thee—may the promises of thy Word which are made to the faithful, and the assurances of peace and reconciliation which are held out to us through Christ, be our support and our consolation amidst all the trials to which we are exposed.

If we shall be called to endure hardships and difficulties in this life, may we consider them only, as they truly are, light afflictions which endure but for a moment ; and may we remember that all our sufferings are only the consequence of sin, and not worthy to be named when compared to what our Saviour endured for our sakes, although he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.

We humbly pray thee, O Lord, to give us more deep and lively impressions of thy love manifested unto us in Christ, and may the remembrance of it ever encourage us to come unto thee, imploring every spiritual blessing. May we remember that if thou sparedst not thine own Son, but didst give him up to the death for us all, that thou wilt with him freely give us all things. Convinced of thy willingness to bestow upon us what we stand in need of, we would implore of thee to send down thy Spirit into our hearts, that he may convince us more fully of the evil and the misery of sin, and make us more

clearly to see the value of thy favour. Oh, let thy Spirit influence our hearts to that which is good. May our corrupt affections be subdued—may heavenly dispositions be given us—may we be enabled to abhor and abstain from sin—may we hunger and thirst after righteousness. And, O Lord, being once heartily engaged in thy service, and being renewed and sanctified by thy Spirit, may we experience the joys resulting from it—may we be filled with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost—may we have a foretaste of that happiness which shall be made perfect in heaven—may we have such a peace as Jesus Christ has left, and which the world can neither give nor take away.

May we rejoice in the ordinances of thy grace here, that we may be prepared for engaging in a more sublime worship hereafter.

We thank and praise thee, O Lord, for the holy sacrament of the Supper, and the invitation given us to become guests at thy holy table. Grant that we may not presume to come to thy table trusting in our own righteousness, but in the manifold and great mercies declared unto us in our Lord Jesus Christ. Give us hearts raised above the desires of this world, and free from all the pollutions of it. Make us truly sensible of the many wants of our souls, that we may come to thy table hungering and thirsting after the blessings of grace ; with an earnest desire to partake of the benefits of thy Divine institution. And, oh, let us there receive the pardon of all our sins, and such supplies of thy grace as may support us under our many weaknesses and infirmities ; and grant that, by a right performance of this and all other religious duties, our faith may be more and more strengthened, our hopes enlivened, our love increased, our zeal inflamed, and our souls so entirely and inseparably united to thee, that

nothing may be ever able to dissolve the union ; but that being begun here in grace, it may hereafter be consummated in glory, through the merits of him that died for us, even the Son of thy eternal love, Jesus Christ the righteous.

With grateful hearts we desire, O Lord, to praise thee that thou hast permitted us to see the return of another Sabbath. May we esteem the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord and honourable. Pour out, we beseech thee, this day a spirit of grace and supplication upon all the congregations of thy people. Bless the ministry of the gospel, and make it the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Replenish all the ministers of thy word with the gifts of thy grace ; animate them with zeal for the interests of thy glory, for the salvation of sinners, and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

And since, thou, O Lord, hast permitted thy people to see the light of a communion Sabbath, do thou prepare them for the devotions of it. Comfort the mourners in Zion. May they experience that wherever there is the sincere desire to seek thee, that there thou makest thine abode. Grant us thy presence and blessing, and the assistance of thy Spirit, in every part of the sacred service.

Hear us, O Lord our God, forgive and bless, direct, quicken, and assist us in the performance of our holy duties, and to Thee be the praise and the glory, now and evermore. Amen.

The portion of the Scriptures to be read—

ISAIAH LIII.

PARAPHRASE XXV. 5-9.

SERMON.

PRAYER AFTER SERMON.

O Lord, with what unfeigned gratitude ought our hearts to be filled for the abundant manifestations of thy goodness with which we are favoured ! Thou hast not only fitted us for praising and enjoying thee, but thou hast revealed unto us thy will and our duty, and furnished us with the means of making ourselves acquainted with all that thou requirest of us. We have been early instructed in the principles of our holy religion. We pray, O Lord, that we may not neglect the precious opportunities which we enjoy for improving ourselves in the knowledge of God, and acquainting ourselves with those things which pertain to our everlasting happiness.

But with what shame ought we to confess, and to deplore the corruption of our nature ! We have sinned against thee, O God, who hast every claim to our love and our obedience, and we are not worthy to be called thy children. We are, indeed, utterly unworthy of so high a privilege ; but, behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we, who are by nature the children of disobedience, should be called the children of God. We are indeed unworthy ; but worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and, blessed be God, he was slain for us. We have indeed sinned against thee, and come short of thy glory ; but, adored be thine infinite mercy, we have an advocate with God the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who is now at thy right hand pleading the merits of his righteousness for our acceptance, and the efficacy of his blood for the pardon of our sins and the purification of our hearts. See, then, O God, our shield ; look upon the face of thine Anointed, in whom thou seest no iniquity in Jacob and no perversity in Israel ; and accept us in thy beloved Son, in whom thou art ever well pleased. Do

thou, our God, supply all our need, according to thy riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst follow with thy divine blessing the religious instructions which have been delivered from thy Word in so far as they have been agreeable to thy will. (Here allude to the text.) We pray that wherever the gospel has this day been preached, it may take effect. Let none of the seed be lost which has been sown. Let no impression which has been made be effaced.

We, O Lord, most humbly and sincerely implore grace from thee the God of all grace and goodness, to fit and prepare us for a worthy participating of the holy sacrament of the Supper.

We pray thee, O God, to bless all those who desire this day to approach the table of our blessed Redeemer, to commemorate his great love to us. While they partake of the elements which represent his precious body and blood, may their hearts be deeply affected with the consideration of his cross and passion. May they remember their sins with true contrition of heart, and the love of that Redeemer who shed his blood for their remission, with the most lively thankfulness.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst abundantly bless the young and all who design this day for the first time to approach a communion table, and publicly profess their faith in the Saviour. Give them that preparation of heart which alone cometh from thee. Do thou work in them whatsoever is wanting to fit them for thy divine acceptance. Do thou impart to their souls new supplies of grace, new life, new love, new vigour, and new resolutions, that they may never faint or become remiss in their duty. And grant that while thy people thirst for thee as in a dry and thirsty land, to see thy power and thy glory as

they have seen thee in the sanctuary, may their souls be filled as with marrow and fatness, that their mouths may praise thee with joyful lips.

Hear us, O Lord, we beseech thee, and let us find favour and acceptance with thee through the merits, and for the sake of thy Son, and our alone Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

PARAPHRASE XLIV. 1-6.

Thereafter the presiding minister addresses the congregation from the pulpit to the following effect, which is called the "Fencing of the Tables."

DISCOURSE I.

The great design for which you are now assembled together is to commemorate the dying love of Christ, who loved you, and gave himself for you. The sacrament of the Supper was instituted by him for the purpose of preserving the memory of his sufferings; and in observing it, you obey his dying command.

When he had eaten the Passover with his disciples, when he took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body broken for you;" and when he took the cup and gave it also to them, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of sins," none were present excepting those whom he had chosen to be his apostles, and who had continued with him in his tribulation. This circumstance teaches us that this service was not designed to be open to all, without discrimination. It is a feast made for the friends of the Saviour, and for them only. No stranger is to intrude himself among the children of God; no

enemy, or rebel, is to mingle with the true and loyal subjects of Christ. In the parable of the marriage supper, when the king came in to see the guests, he observed one that had not a wedding garment, and asked him, "Friend, how camest thou in thither, not having a wedding garment?" The man was speechless, self-condemned, and unable to answer; and the king said to his servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In the sight of God, none have a right to take their places at this table but they who are his friends; they who, by the prevailing principles of their souls, subjected to the authority of Christ, and to the constraining influence of his love, are habitually prepared for death, and for mingling with the redeemed from among men in the kingdom of heaven. There may be much imperfection, but there must be the truth of faith and repentance. There may be much weakness, much darkness, fear, doubt, or anxiety; but there must be a prevailing desire to enjoy communion with Christ, a perception of his excellence, and a cordial subjection of all the powers of the soul to him as your Lord.

It is necessary, then, in this holy service that the characters of the disciples of Christ, of worthy communicants, should be publicly declared. Accordingly, it hath been the custom, immediately previous to the service, in order to vindicate the purity of the Church of the living God, to separate between the precious and the vile, to set a fence about the table of the Lord, to warn the ignorant, the irreligious, the profane, not to presume to appear amongst the sons of God—solemnly to debar from this privilege those who are "enemies to God in their minds, and by wicked works." We pretend not to judge the heart. We explain the characters of those upon whom

God has pronounced his blessing, but the application of these characters we must leave to the conscience ; it is a work that lies between God and the soul. But the characters themselves it is our duty to unfold, and to unfold them faithfully, that the name of our God may not be blasphemed.

In the name, then, and by the authority of the Great Head of the Church, by whom this service was appointed, I debar all ignorant persons continuing in a state of ignorance, all who know not the nature of the institution, or the end for which it was appointed, or the doctrines and blessings emblematically held forth by the bread broken and by the wine poured out.

All are debarred who habitually neglect the worship of God, who are strangers to personal devotion, or who suffer their families to grow up without the knowledge of the God of the families of the whole earth, or who pour contempt upon the public worship of God, and habitually profane his holy day ; all who condemn the name or the Word, the day or the service of the living God ; all whose wills are habitually opposed to the will and law of the great and righteous Governor of the universe ; all whose hearts are unsanctified ; all whose affections are fixed on the things of time and of sense ; all who are conscious that they live in the habitual practice of known sin, or in the habitual and allowed neglect of known duty—all these are debarred from taking their place at this holy table. “ What communion hath light with darkness ? What fellowship hath Christ with Belial ? ”

It is, nevertheless, true that there are profane and irreligious men who come to a communion table merely from worldly motives and temporal considerations, and not from love to God, and obedience to the last and dying command of Jesus Christ. Yes ; there are in the visible

church multitudes who have nothing of the Christian but the name, and some occasional appearances. Here we have principally in view those who, after having received a religious education, and been early instructed in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, have surrendered themselves to the gratification of their corrupt lusts and passions, and thereby stifled in their heart the fear of God and all concern about their salvation. When tormented by remorse, which conscience sometimes awakens in their soul, they seek for relief by joining in Christian worship, and come to a communion table to shew forth the death of a Saviour in whom they do not believe, and to obtain assurance of a salvation in which they have no part, and which they seldom or never think of. With a profane and unbelieving heart, they preserve a semblance of religion. Impious in their private conversation, they wish to appear religious in their outward and public conduct. Beyond all doubt, such irreligious men pollute this ordinance, and aggravate their own condemnation.

If among those who design to communicate at the Lord's table there are some to be found utterly unworthy of the Christian name, there is a greater number of others whom, though they seem to have a better claim to it, yet cannot be regarded as true Christians. The end of the gospel, in requiring faith and repentance as essential means of salvation, is to make us die unto sin and live unto righteousness, to purify us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. But those of whom we now speak, enslaved to certain sins which they cannot resolve to part with, and pursuing a course of life contrary to the laws of the gospel, and in which they are kept by their worldly interests and corrupt passions and habits, form to themselves very false notions of faith and repentance. They

satisfy themselves with a faith without works, and a repentance without reformation. According to them, it is sufficient to confide in the mercy of God, and in the merits of Christ, and from time to time to confess their sins and to ask pardon of them, to be orthodox in their religious opinions, and regular in attending the duties of public worship—this they think sufficient to warrant them to believe that they are in a state of grace and reconciliation with God, that they may apply to themselves all the promises of the gospel, and confidently cherish the hope of salvation. They therefore rarely fail to communicate when opportunity of performing that solemn act of worship occurs, and to make some preparation for that sacred service. In one word, they bring to the Lord's table everything except the sacrifice of their favourite sins, and that purity of heart which is the very thing that the Lord requires. Consequently, they are seen speedily to return to the practice of their former sins and favourite pleasures. But we ask, What ought such men to think of their communions? Do they not know that one sin deliberately persisted in is sufficient to exclude a man from the kingdom of heaven, and to disqualify him for being admitted to the table of the Lord? What advantages can such persons expect to derive from commemorating the death of Christ? Let them but examine the use which they make of this holy institution, and then let them flatter themselves, if they dare, that they truly discern the Lord's body. What was Christ's great object in dying for us, and in giving us in the sacrament of the Supper so affecting a memorial of his death? Was it not to convince us of the infinite evil and danger of sin, to recover us from the power and practice of it, and to restore us to the love, and image, and favour, and obedience of God? But those who design to communicate at

the Lord's table, whose characters we have described, take encouragement from the death of Christ to remain in their sins, since they appropriate to themselves the benefits of it, although they persevere in their iniquities. Every communion, instead of furthering them in holiness, removes them from it ; instead of awakening them out of their security, sinks them deeper into it. Surely such persons have reason to fear, in coming to the Lord's table in such a state, that they will eat and drink unworthily.

There are true Christians who live in the exercise of faith and repentance, who sincerely strive to avoid sin and to obey the law of Christ, who, nevertheless, do not always communicate with that spiritual advantage and comfort which they expect from the ordinance, and which it is designed to impart to the soul. Besides faith and repentance, a profitable participation of the holy sacrament requires some peculiar exercises and dispositions of mind, such as self-examination, warm devotion of heart, deep humility, ardent gratitude, love, and dedication to Jesus Christ. These acts of soul should constantly accompany our solemn remembrance of his sufferings and death at a communion table. Now, in order to attain this suitable frame of mind, serious meditation and diligent preparation of heart are needful, which even true Christians too often neglect. Depending too much on their sincerity, and on the grace they have already received, they are not sufficiently aware of their own weakness, and of their need of renewed supplies of the grace of Christ ; and they do not put a proper interval between their worldly occupations and the most solemn acts of religious worship. It is no matter of wonder, therefore, if they complain of distractions, of coldness, and indifference in their devotions, and if they derive but little profit

and consolation from their communions. Yes, without doubt, their languor and deadness in a service so eminently calculated to kindle their zeal and to animate their devotion are a just ground of self-reproach, and an offence to their Saviour, in which they cannot continue without endangering their salvation. If they receive little benefit and refreshment from gospel ordinances, it is entirely owing to their own negligence; and if they continue thus to misimprove the instituted means of advancing and establishing them in holiness and righteousness, it is much to be feared that they will gradually decline in piety and godliness. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

But if, after all your diligence and assiduous application to God and to your duty, you do not experience that fervour and comfort which you wish to feel, still you should not be discouraged; it is the effect of human infirmity—under which the best Christians labour in this present life. Instead of being kept back by your imperfections from the table of the Lord, you should come boldly unto the throne of grace, that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. They who are most holy are most sensible of their own imperfections, and most deeply humbled under their sense of unworthiness. Study, then, to retain and cherish every devout sentiment, every holy resolution, and every good tendency, that the Word of God, and the ordinances of his grace, produce in your minds. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. Remember how you have received and heard, and hold fast and repent. Rely not on human means for your purification from the stains of sin; for the blood of Christ is the only fountain effectual for this purpose. Have daily recourse to it by faith, which purifieth the

heart ; for it will avail you nothing that Jesus shed his blood, if application of it is not made to purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Faith renders you partakers of the merit of Christ's death, and receives pardon and sanctification, which are offered to you only through his atonement and intercession. Let love also soften and inflame your hearts. Risen with Christ, you will seek the things which are above, and shew that you have learned to overcome the temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the solicitations of the flesh. Whoever can lift up his heart to God, and say with Peter, " Lord, thou who knowest all things, knowest that I love thee," is invited to declare his attachment to his Lord by commemorating his dying love, and will be a welcome guest at his table.

Now, let not the man who is conscious that any sin has dominion over him, dare to take his place at the Lord's table. But let those whose consciences bear them witness that the fruits of the Spirit prevail in their hearts, and are manifested in their lives—who have the Spirit witnessing with their spirits that they are the children of God, delight in their privilege of approaching unto God—let them say with the Psalmist, " I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy." May Jesus himself meet you at his table, and may his banner over you be love. Amen.

Let us sing to the praise of God—

PARAPHRASE XXXL 6.

While the congregation is singing the foregoing paraphrase, or some other suited to the occasion, the elders are engaged in bringing forward and arranging the bread

and wine on the communion table, at which the first portion of intending communicants have all the time been seated, and which is, generally, one range or more of pews connected together, so as to form a continuous table or tables, extending nearly the whole length of the church, and neatly covered with a white linen cloth. This arrangement having been completed, the minister descends from the pulpit, places himself at the head of the table beside the elements, and, the elders standing on each side of him, reads the warrant for the proceedings from 1st Corinthians xi. 23-30, and adds the following words:—On that night in which our blessed Lord was betrayed, he took bread, and before he brake it, he gave thanks, as we now do in his name, and after his example offer up our united thanksgiving to God for his saving mercies here set before us.

Let us pray—

CONSECRATION PRAYER.*

Almighty God, and, through Jesus Christ, our most merciful Father, we desire, over these memorials of a dying Saviour, these symbols of redeeming love, to prostrate ourselves at the footstool of thy throne, and to pour out our souls before thee in gratitude, in love, and in praise. With holy awe and wonder and astonishment we desire to contemplate all the manifestations of thy glorious perfections in thy works of creation and provi-

* Particular names are given to different parts of the communion service. This prayer at the table is called the "Consecration Prayer." The sermon in the forenoon diet is called the "Action Sermon," and the addresses to the communicants at the table are called "Table Services."

dence. But above all, with our souls and all that is within us, we would bless thee for Jesus Christ, thy unspeakable gift.

We thank thee that from eternity thy delights were set upon the children of men. We thank thee that when the fulness of time was come, thou didst send forth thy Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. We thank thee for that great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. We thank thee for his exemplary life, his heavenly doctrines, his expiatory sufferings, his glorious resurrection, his triumphant ascension. We thank thee for all those benefits which are the fruits of his obedience and death. We thank thee that to perpetuate the memory of the benefits of his death, he hath instituted the sacrament of the Supper, and commanded us to do this in remembrance of him.

With heartfelt gratitude we hear the joyful sound, and comply with the dying command of our once suffering but now exalted Lord, most humbly beseeching that thou who hast provided this gospel feast, and hast given us the invitation, wouldest vouchsafe to bestow upon us, thy humble worshippers, all those graces which constitute the wedding garment in which all the acceptable guests at thy table must be clothed, that in the exercise of a godly sorrow for all our past sins, of an unfeigned repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, in perfect love and charity with all mankind, we may so partake of these outward symbols of bread and wine; which, by thy command, we employ to represent the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Give thy blessing on them, that the bread which is broken may be to us the communion of the body of Christ, and the wine

which is poured out may be to us the communion of the blood of Christ—that so, in partaking of these outward elements, we may, at the same time, partake of Jesus Christ and his benefits, and by so doing may have our faith strengthened, our holy purposes confirmed, our love to God and charity to men more and more increased, and our right and title to life eternal sealed and applied to our souls.

In this hope, O most merciful Father, we desire on our part, over these symbols, solemnly to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and all other lords who have hitherto had dominion over us.

We do accept of thee, O Father Almighty, as our God, of thy Son as our Saviour, of thy Spirit as our guide, of thy statutes as our counsellors, and do hereby, over these symbols of the mercies of God, present our souls and our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, beseeching that, whether by prosperity or adversity, by health or by sickness, by life or by death, by consolations or by desertions, thou mayest be glorified in us, and that we may be enabled to glorify thee.

Our waiting eyes, O Lord, are towards thee—our hope is in thy mercy. May grace, mercy, and peace be upon us, and upon all thy servants and people who shall this day encompass thine altar; and all that we ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

FENCING OF THE TABLES.

DISCOURSE II.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and Head of the Church, instituted the holy sacrament of the Supper

on that night in which he was betrayed, and commanded all his true and faithful disciples to observe it in remembrance of him. You must, therefore, in obedience to the command of your Saviour, and with a thankful remembrance of his astonishing love in giving himself to die for your redemption, devoutly and frequently partake of the holy sacrament of the Supper, and thereby renew your baptismal covenant. You must remember that you do not only receive, eat and drink bread and wine blessed, broken, poured out, and given as signs to put you in mind that Christ was consecrated of God to be both the high priest and sacrifice of atonement for your sins; and that his body was wounded to death, and his blood shed on the cross for your redemption; but you are also, by a living faith, to receive spiritually your crucified Saviour as the food or life of your souls, for the nourishment of your graces, the confirming of your faith, the enflaming of your love, the strengthening of your hope, the communicating from him the Head to you the members all things needful for growth in him, and spiritual union with him, and assurance of eternal life by him. You must join together in the celebration of this ordinance as members of one body, whereof Christ is the Head; testifying thereby that you have but one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and one Father of all; and are, though many members, yet but one body—all partakers, therefore, of one bread, and bound to live in love and peace, as well as in holiness all your days.

The Passover amongst the Jews bore the nearest resemblance to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for it commemorated a deliverance, but it was a deliverance by blood, that house alone being safe on which the blood of the paschal lamb was found. Christians remember, in

this institution, their deliverance, and that it was accomplished only by blood. Jews and Christians agree in this, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. The Jew who trusted for acceptance and forgiveness without the blood of atonement, and the Christian who hopes for salvation without the sacrifice of Christ, are both equally deluded. No man can expect to be saved in any other way than on account of the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ ; and this sacrament is expressly appointed as a profession of this belief, and is to Christians a most solemn and indispensable duty. They are, at all times, to be animated with faith in the sacrifice of Jesus, but in this ordinance they more solemnly declare before men, spirits, and God, their sole reliance on the perfect work of Christ, and their fixed desire to become his true disciples. The celebration of this sacrament is not optional, for it is binding on every Christian. It was the dying command of Jesus that it should be observed, and it was the anxious desire of his followers to observe it frequently. If it be inquired, Who are to observe it ? I reply, All who are Christians. There is no exception ; it was a general and positive command. The appointment is, "Do this in remembrance of me." You, then, who are Christians must observe it, and you who do not observe it are not Christians, and do not love him who said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Christians are not merely to keep the commandments contained in the moral law, and to maintain a general principle of love and obedience, but they are to observe every ordinance appointed by God. Surely this command, given just as our Lord was about to enter upon his last sufferings, his atoning sacrifice, and which relates to an ordinance which so manifestly expresses the great doctrines of salvation, cannot be neglected by any

one who professes to love Jesus, and to be called by his name. But it may be urged that this is an ordinance instituted for disciples, and therefore that none who are not of the household of faith dare partake of it. Now, if this be brought forward by any man as an excuse, I would have him consider, that he who is not of the household of faith never shall be admitted into heaven, and, therefore, he professes his belief that he shall not enter into that blessed place.

They who lightly esteem the Lord's Supper, and who do not partake of it, either from indifference or from a sense of their having no active desire to be Christians, do afford convincing proof that they have no hope of heaven; not that this sacrament is of any virtue in itself, but because their state of mind is as opposite to that required for heaven as it is for participating in the Lord's Supper. I would wish every man seriously to consider this fact, and if he be convinced that he cannot safely approach the Lord's table, it is indeed time that he begin a preparation. Who, then, are invited, nay, commanded to celebrate this ordinance? I reply, all who believe that Jesus is the Saviour of sinners; all who have faith in him as their Redeemer. But how shall a man know if he have that living, active faith which is distinguished from simple assent to evident truth? I answer, by its producing love; and he will know whether he love God and Christ, not only by his consciousness of his own affection, but also by his anxiety to serve God; for Jesus himself hath given this test, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The question, then, may be answered by every one who examines his own heart and inclinations. He must know whether he feel love to God, and a desire, from that principle, to serve him. He may be sensible of the great coldness of

his affection, the truly imperfect state of his service, the innumerable breaches of the holy law of God. But yet, amidst all these humbling circumstances, he does nevertheless feel love to God ; and, however feeble it may be, he may not, without untruth, deny it, but can say, "Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou knowest that I love thee." While he says so, the sense of his unworthiness, and the languor or coldness of his affection penetrate him so that he almost doubts whether he hath not deceived himself by a momentary impulse when he uttered that appeal ; but still he does feel that he hath a spark of love, and, by the grace of God, he obtains the witness of the Spirit of God within him that he is not deceived ; for the view he hath of his languid affections is accompanied with a desire to God that it might be otherwise, and his prayer, through Christ, is not unanswered, but the Spirit of love himself animates, with more or less fervour, the praying soul.

As Jesus came not into the world to call the righteous, but sinners, so his ordinances are not instituted for those who are satisfied with their own goodness, but for those who are sensible of their wickedness and their need of a Saviour. All who desire to be saved by Jesus are invited to remember him, and no wedding garment is required but that of faith in his redemption. All who believe in Jesus as a Saviour, and whose belief is so sincere and active as to influence the heart, to produce love, and an endeavour to obey the law of God, in a dependence on the assistance and sanctifying influence of his Spirit, may partake of this ordinance, nay, are commanded to partake of it.

As it is an ordinance of peculiar solemnity, instituted under the most impressive circumstances, and, with the *blessing of God*, of great benefit to the soul, it is the

duty of all to prepare for the celebration of it, that they may derive the expected advantage. Now, in doing so, your first and great object is to obtain a just notion of the evil of sin, and its extreme hatefulness in the sight of God. You must consider that, as God is infinite in holiness, so his hatred to sin must also be infinite, and, consequently, great beyond the power of conception to conceive. You must then examine your own hearts, look into them, for the purpose of knowing your errors and reforming your lives. You make humble and full confession of all your guilt to your heavenly Father, beseeching his forgiveness through Christ, and his grace to avoid sin hereafter. It is by dwelling on the doctrines of the gospel that you are filled with contrition for your sin, an earnest hatred to it, and a desire to live in holiness, that you see the necessity of a Redeemer, and that Jesus is the Redeemer suited to your necessities. The consideration of what he hath done, and promised to do for you, fills your souls with faith, love, and hope; and, with thankful, humble hearts, you commemorate that event on which you place your sole reliance. With this, you join most earnest and frequent prayer for the sanctifying and strengthening influences of the Divine Spirit, and in all your meditations, in all your reflections and preparations, your thoughts arise to God in prayer, and your expectations are from his Holy Spirit. You go to the Lord's table, to acknowledge there your sin and misery, your desert of punishment. You go to offer your grateful thanks for the Saviour who is given to you, to express your belief that you can only be saved by Jesus, and that Jesus is able and willing to save you from all your transgressions. You go to profess your reliance on him alone, and to devote yourselves solemnly to him, as his redeemed people. You go to solicit his

promised Spirit, and to pray for strength to finish your period of probation. You go as guilty creatures to beseech pardon, as weak creatures to seek for strength, as miserable creatures to obtain comfort, as dying creatures to look for immortality. You go, in obedience to Christ's command, but you go willingly, and with thankfulness. You go to profess your cordial faith in, and to feel the truth of, all the doctrines relating to salvation. You go to receive Christ as your Saviour, to give yourselves to him as willing subjects. You go to be made one in Christ, to live by him, and to receive through him the Holy Spirit, that you may obtain spiritual gifts and bear the fruit of his Spirit. As Jesus, in his interesting prayer, addressed the Father, saying, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that they also may be one in us;" so, you go to obtain this blessing through faith, and that God the Father may love you as children, seeing you are united to Christ who prayed for this paternal love, "that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." All these blessings you go to the Lord's table to partake of, not that you receive them there for the first time, or that you receive them on account of any virtue in the sacrament itself, but you have them there renewed to you, and have your faith increased, and your love exalted, by the blessing of God upon an ordinance which so immediately represents the grand and sole foundation of all your hopes—the death of Jesus Christ. You who partake of this ordinance without reverence, without faith and love—you who are ignorant of the doctrines of the gospel, and whose life is not influenced by its principles—you who receive not Jesus as your only Saviour, and give not yourselves to him as his faithful, loving, and obedient subjects—eat and drink unworthily, not dis-

cerning the Lord's body, and bring judgment instead of blessing on yourselves. You walk not in the Spirit, you fulfil the lust of the flesh, and are thus described in Galatians, 5th chapter, 9th, 20th, 21st verses. Let those who desire communion with God pray earnestly for the Spirit of Christ, that they may see their guilt, and form just notions of the danger of sin, of the way of life, and of the superiority of eternity over time. Abstain from sin, abound in duty, and glorify God in all you do. Study so to live as to adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour.

You are now to renew your vows and obligations to be the Lord's, and to walk in his ways all the days of your life. See that you enter into them with an entire dependence upon his strength; and, oh, remember them afterwards to carry them into execution. Live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and those who do so live and walk are pointed out in Galatians, 5th chapter, 22d, 23d, and 24th verses. Walk as children of the light and of the day. "Take the cup of salvation and pay your vows to your Redeemer, in the presence of his people." Amen.

CONSECRATION PRAYER.

O Lord God, we would desire to approach into thy sacred presence, and to offer up our thanksgiving and our praise unto thee for the numberless blessings which we enjoy. Thy goodness, O Lord, is so unbounded, thy Providence so kind, and thy grace so conspicuously displayed in all thy dealings towards us, that it is impossible that we can ever discharge the obligations we are under to thee our God.

We bless thee, O Lord, that thou didst in infinite wisdom and boundless mercy provide a remedy—an all-sufficient Saviour for us, Jesus Christ the righteous. Through him we desire to come unto thee; in him we desire to be found. His merit is our only plea; his righteousness our only ground of hope and confidence.

We give thee thanks, O most gracious God, that thou hast appointed certain ordinances in thy Church, by means of which the benefits of Christ's redemption are communicated.

We thank thee that Christ Jesus, thy Son our Lord, hath instituted the holy sacrament of the Supper, to be a commemoration of his infinite love in condescending to take our nature upon him, and to suffer death upon the cross, in order to make expiation for our sins; and that he has commanded us in his Word to do this in remembrance of him. We, O Lord, who are unworthy of thy regards, desire, in obedience to thy command, and in confidence of thy great goodness and mercy, to approach thy holy table, confessing ourselves unworthy to partake of this feast, which thou hast prepared for thy faithful and obedient servants.

But do thou, O most merciful Father, who hast compassion on all men, and despisest nothing which thou hast made, pardon, we humbly beseech thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son, all those sins that have rendered us unworthy, and let thy infinite goodness and mercy supply all our wants, and fit our souls for a devout and worthy receiving of this blessed sacrament. Banish from us, we beseech thee, all vain and worldly thoughts, and fill us with those holy dispositions which become thy presence, and those that wait on thee.

Grant, O gracious Father, that by partaking of these outward and visible signs, the symbols of the body and

blood of Christ, we may receive that inward and spiritual grace which will sanctify our souls, and strengthen our feeble resolutions, and enable us to triumph over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Root out of our hearts whatever is offensive to thy pure eyes; and endue us with all those heavenly graces which are pleasing in thy sight, and which thou wilt eternally reward.

Clothe us, O God, with the wedding garment, and make us, though of ourselves most unworthy, yet by thy mercy and grace acceptable, guests at thy holy table, that through the blood shed upon the cross, we may be cleansed from all our sins. In the emblems of Christ's body and blood, which are here set before us, and which we pray thee to sanctify for our use, may we see that life of the soul which he purchased for us by his death, and henceforth live as he has commanded us.

May those arms that were once stretched upon the cross, be now open to receive us to thy mercy. Send us not away empty from thy presence, but feed us with the bread of life, and may our souls thereby be strengthened and refreshed, and be so filled with thy grace, that they may never more become the seat of vanity and folly, but be the constant abode of thy eternal and ever-blessed Spirit. Be thou the only object of our love, the only spring of our desires, the constant food and nourishment of our souls in this life, and their eternal reward and happiness in that which is to come.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, and accept of our spiritual sacrifices, through the merits of our once crucified and now exalted Redeemer; and we shall ascribe glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now and evermore. Amen.

COMMUNION-TABLE ADDRESSES.

The Minister then, still standing in the same place, addresses those seated at the table, and about to communicate, in terms to the following effect :—

TABLE I.

Intending communicants, having now read our warrant for the celebration of this solemn ordinance, and, after our Redeemer's example, having given thanks, and prayed for a blessing, I proceed to put into your hands the symbols of your Saviour's body broken and his blood shed for you ; the gift of himself and all his blessings to worthy communicants.

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread ; and when he had given thanks, as has been done in his name, he brake it, and said, "Take, eat ; [here the Minister breaks, and gives the bread to the communicants] this is my body which is broken for you ; this do in remembrance of me."

[Having paused for a little, he adds—]

After the same manner, also, he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many ; drink ye all of it. [Here the Minister gives the cup to communicants.] For as often as ye eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Or they may be addressed to the following effect,

before distributing the elements. Sometimes the one form is adopted, and sometimes the other :—

TABLE I.

“Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you, that you should be called the sons of God.” To be called the sons of God is to enjoy all the rights and advantages belonging to that high and honourable designation and endearing relationship. But how do you acquire this glorious title? What right have you sinful mortals to regard yourselves as the children of God, and to lay claim to the prerogatives belonging to that name? For this you are indebted to the love of God; you obtain it not by nature, but by grace; it is by your adoption into the peculiar family of God, by a new birth, which God produces in all the objects of his redeeming love. As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. And, says the apostle to the Galatians, “But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that you might receive the adoption of sons.” Why did he leave the abodes of glory and become man? Why did he assume the form of a servant? Why did he humble himself unto the death? But from a principle of love. It was sinners doomed to condemnation and death that he came to seek and to save, to heal, to purify, to deliver, and to sanctify. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

The mystery of redemption exhibited to your view in the holy sacrament of the Lord’s Supper is a subject of admiration to the angels of light. That which was a

stumbling-block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks, appears to the eye of faith, in the holy ordinance of the Supper, to be the power of God, and the wisdom of God. There the cross of Christ, or the expiation of sin made, appears to be the chief work of the Divine perfections. In the death of Christ you behold Divine justice securing all its rights; holiness manifesting its abhorrence of sin; mercy and love shining in a brightness till then unknown, and offering the most effectual consolations to souls oppressed with a sense of guilt. In the death of Christ you behold sin punished, and the sinner saved; the law magnified, and grace freely manifested; you see heaven and earth reunited; man entering into favour with God, and God bestowing the most precious gifts upon man. Lively as are the narrations of Christ's sufferings which are given us in the Gospels, still they are only very imperfect images of what he endured. Transport yourselves in your thoughts to Mount Calvary, and behold the Son of God, the messenger of his Father's mercy to the human race, suspended on a cross, a crown of thorns upon his head, and his hands and feet pierced with cruel nails. In the midst of those torments his love shone forth. Are not these objects, communicants, worthy of the highest admiration? When you contemplate in the holy sacrament those great and transporting truths, have you not good reason to exclaim with the apostle Paul, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the goodness of God!"

Jesus Christ comes to you when he invites you to a communion table. He then stands at the door of your hearts and knocks, entreating you to open, that he may enter in, and make you partakers of all spiritual blessings; that he may more entirely subdue your unbelief, strengthen your faith, and give you new tokens of his

love. A benefactor coming on such a gracious errand, ought surely to meet with a ready and welcome reception. Come to a communion table under a lively sense of your spiritual miseries and wants, bewailing and lamenting them—saying unto Jesus Christ, I am not worthy of the least of all thy mercies. Come hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and ye shall be filled. Christ filleth the hungry with good things, but the rich he sendeth empty away. Come with hearts overflowing with sincere gratitude to the Saviour for the eternal blessings he hath purchased for you, which he freely offers to your acceptance, and which he is ready to seal to you by his Spirit. And what is it, communicants, to love Jesus Christ, but to feel your absolute need of his grace, and to regard him as your supreme God—to be perfectly convinced that you can do nothing, and are nothing without him—nothing in nature, nothing in society, nothing in grace. It is not merely from a principle of gratitude and love to Christ that you ought to communicate, but in obedience to his positive command, and with a view to your own spiritual and eternal interest.

Now, there is no means more proper for increasing and establishing your faith than the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper, which was instituted by Jesus Christ himself for that special purpose. In that ordinance are exhibited, to your external senses, his sufferings and death for the redemption of your souls. These things are represented by the bread and wine made use of in this sacrament by Divine appointment. By these symbols the labours of Christ's love are, in some sort, rendered visible to you. A communion table is a striking monument of the truth of his mission in the character of Redeemer of the world. The bread and wine thereat distributed, are

solemn pledges that it is for you he suffered and died. In partaking of the communion he says to you, "This is my body which is broken for you, take, and eat; this is my blood shed for the remission of your sins, drink ye all of it. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." So excellently fitted is the holy ordinance of the Supper to recall to your remembrance the wondrous things that Christ did for you, and to dissipate all your fears, and doubts, and distrusts; and thus it clearly manifests the wisdom and goodness of its Divine Institutor, and gives you, when you worthily partake of it, ground to address him in this language—"Lord, it is good for us to be here."

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks," as his servant has already done in his name, "he brake it. and gave it to his disciples," as I give this bread to you, and to you, and to you all, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."

"After the same manner also he took the cup when he had supped, and gave it to his disciples," as I give this cup to you, saying "This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many; drink ye all of it. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

The elements are now carried round by the elders in silence, and put into the hands of each communicant. The minister sits till this is finished.

Then he rises and resumes his address:—

Christ is graciously present with his own children, when planted around the sacred table which he hath covered with the bread of life—with those who, in obedience to his dying command, publicly acknowledge the infinite value and efficacy of his death. What service can you perform, what worship can you render to Jesus Christ, more pleasing and acceptable than a sincere, and open, and unreserved dedication of yourselves to his honour and glory? There is no gospel ordinance which God more remarkably accompanies with the gifts of his Spirit than the holy sacrament of the Supper.

Will a merciful God refuse to bestow upon his people that grace which they supplicate in faith and in fervour of spirit, over the sacred symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood?

Communicants, if ever the lively exercise of faith is necessary and profitable unto you, it is in partaking of the holy sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Your offering at God's altar is vain, if you are not intimately convinced of the great truths of that religion whereof the death of Christ is the seal, and which you solemnly and publicly profess to believe every time you approach to a communion table. But faith is also necessary in a more particular meaning of the word, as it implies a hearty persuasion of the great and consoling doctrine, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that his blood cleanseth from all sin, even from the deepest stains of guilt. Faith is necessary in the holy sacrament, in order to enable you to make a personal application of what, in a more general view, you ought to consider as offered to all. I behold Jesus, the Lamb of God, dying to take away the sins of the world. I am ardently desirous that he should take away my sin in particular. I come to him with this view, fully persuaded that he

can make me clean, and believing that he will do so, if I seek him with proper dispositions of heart. I pray him to bestow upon me the dispositions that are needful, humbly trusting that he will not withhold them. By faith I pierce through those veils of bread and wine, which, in some manner, hide my Saviour, or at least, represent him to me in a state of weakness and infirmity. I rise to the heavens, and contemplate Jesus seated there, at the right hand of God, making intercession for his faithful servants which are upon earth. In that state of glory I cry to him from the depths of my misery, saying unto him, "My Lord and my God." My Lord whom I am bound to serve, and to whom at this moment I make vows of constant and unreserved obedience; but, my God, who alone can pardon my sins, subdue my corruption, make me triumph over death, and at last receive me into glory in the kingdom of eternity. Are these your sentiments and dispositions while seated at a communion table? Are you animated with love to Christ, and inviolable resolutions of adherence to him? And what can tend so effectually to kindle your feeble spark of love into a bright flame as the contemplation of that great miracle of love, Jesus bearing your sins in his own body on the accursed tree? Such an object presented to the eyes of your body and mind should inspire you with something more lively and heavenly than what you ordinarily experience. Say to Christ, with the apostle Peter, "Lord thou knowest all things, thou knowest that we love thee." Remember, however, that the protestations of love which you make to Christ at a communion table must be accompanied with firm and insuperable resolutions of adherence to him in the face of every danger and difficulty. See that ye "walk worthy of your calling," that ye "adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all

things." Remember how soon the pure gold may become dim, and the most fine gold become changed. See that your light is ever bright and shining before men. Now that Christ hath made you free, see that ye be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Sit loose to all the cares, and all the pleasures, and all the things of this life. Be frequently at the throne of grace. When oppressed with trouble you should look forward with faith and hope to that blessed place, where you shall be freed from all your afflictions, where your souls shall enjoy undisturbed rest and peace, and where sorrow and misery and death shall be eternal strangers. When you are once landed in the pure regions of immortality, what a comfort will it be for you to stand on the shore and look back on those rough and dangerous seas which you have escaped! How pleasant to remember your past labours and sufferings, and to experience that you are beyond the reach of those temptations which were wont to assail you with so much violence and success! What a blessed estate! what a glorious portion! Can you say it "remaineth" for you, that when these heavens and this earth shall all pass away, you, with all the glorified yonder, shall serve the Lord without wearying, and without fainting, without faltering, for ever?

Go now from the table of the Lord, and may the God of love and peace be with you. Amen.

Rise from this table, and give place to others, singing to his praise in the 103d Psalm, from the beginning.

While this psalm is singing, the first communicants retire from the table, and it is filled by others. The presiding minister leaves his place at the table. He then takes his seat at the table as one of the next portion of

communicants ; and, after he has communicated, returns to the pulpit, where he presides until the service is finished. He is succeeded in the meantime by another clergyman, who addresses the next portion of the congregation that comes forward. The same thing is done by him, or others who may be present as assistants, till all have communicated in succession.

TABLE II.

The incarnation of the Son of God is the most wonderful of all the events of which we have any knowledge, and it is the most deeply connected with our welfare. The world passes it by in unbelief, or as if it were of no importance ; but no true Christian can look at the fact, that the Son of God became incarnate, but with the deepest emotion. That the First-begotten of the Father, the Heir of all things, by whom all worlds were created, and by the word of whose power all things are upheld—who is the effulgency of the Divine glory, and the manifestation of the Divine perfections—should by himself purge our sins, is a mystery of love which exceeds and overwhelms all our admiration, praise, and gratitude.

No sooner had Adam fallen into sin, than our Lord was announced, in obscure but emphatical terms, as he who was to bruise the head of the serpent ; he was announced as the mediator of a new covenant, a covenant of grace. Notified to all following generations, all the dispensations of Providence prepared the world for his appearance. After him the patriarchs sighed. It was in preparation for his arrival that the Levitical economy consisted. Its shadows exhibited him, its victims prefigured him, and its prophets opened the mouth only to celebrate him. One fixed the time in which he was to

be born, another marked out the place of his birth ; one spoke of his family, and others of his humiliations and sufferings ; one foretold the prodigies of his ministry, another the glory of his reign ; one expressed the end of his mission, another spoke of the unworthy treatment he was to meet with from perverse and blinded men. They accumulated emblems the most varied and exalted, in order to give some faint idea of his majesty. In their mouth he was the witness of the people, the leader and commander of the people. He was the right hand of the Most High, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the King of kings, strong and mighty in battle. He was the Redeemer, the light, the consolation, the Holy One of Israel. He was the Star of Jacob, the dew of heaven, the hidden manna, the Branch. He was the fairest of the children of men, the spouse of the Church, the ruler whose empire was to extend from sea to sea. He was the Angel of the covenant, the Angel of the Divine Presence, the desire of all nations—in one word, he was “The Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of whose government and peace there was to be no end.” At length that memorable day arrived when the Lord was born in the city of David. Many wonderful events signalised his coming. When the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, was accomplished at Bethlehem, in its vicinity shepherds were watching their flocks by night. An angel of the Lord, the bringer of good tidings, appeared to them, and a celestial light shone around them. They were seized with sudden terror ; but the angel said, “Fear not : for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” At the hearing of these

wonderful names, a numerous host of angels made the air resound with solemn acclamations and hymns of praise. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will towards men." But all these things, though strange and astonishing, must strike a Christian mind less than the manger in which the Lord was laid, than the swaddling bands in which he was wrapt, than that abject poverty and meanness in which he was born. Those clouds hide his glory from the eyes of carnal men, but they cannot hinder one whose eyes are opened to discern spiritual things from seeing treasures of wisdom, of mercy, and of love. Jesus Christ was born in poverty, because he came to degrade in your eyes all the show, and pomp, and parade of this world. He was born in meanness, because he was sent to humble and confound human pride, to correct your florid ideas of this world, to remove your weaknesses, and to cure your errors. He was born in sorrows, because he came to expiate your sins, and to teach you to endure trials and tribulations. Good reason had an apostle to say, "That it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." The ways of God are not your ways, neither are his thoughts your thoughts. It is by this sign, that disappoints and confounds all the plans of human wisdom and vanity, that you recognise him whose name is Wonderful. It is Jesus Christ despised and rejected by men whom he came to instruct and to save; it is Jesus Christ expiring on a cross in the midst of a malicious and impious people, but perfectly resigned and obedient to the will of his Father—Jesus the Lamb of God, who opened not his mouth when bearing the inconceivable punishment which was due to the sins of all the redeemed. In the garden

of Gethsemane he was troubled and sore afraid at the sight of the bitter cup which was given him to drink, but he calmly submitted to the will of the Father, saying, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Betrayed by one of his own disciples, bound in fetters, conducted before unjust judges, smitten on the face by a rude soldier, delivered up to the fury of his enemies, covered with wounds, nailed to the cross amidst the imprecations of a blind and unrelenting people—nothing was capable of shaking his patience, or of weakening his love. These things which we have mentioned are some of Christ's outward sufferings ; but who can conceive or express the inward woes which he endured when offering himself a sacrifice for your sins ? Men may paint Christ's outward sufferings, but not the inward excellency from which their virtue flowed ; we may paint the outward appearance of his sorrows, but not the inward bitterness, or invisible causes of them ; men can paint the cursed tree, but not the curse of the law that made it such ; men can paint Christ bearing the cross to Calvary, but not Christ bearing the sins of many ; we may describe the nails piercing his sacred flesh, but who can describe eternal justice piercing both flesh and spirit ? we may describe the soldier's spear, but not the arrows of the Almighty ; the cup of vinegar which he but tasted, but not the cup of wrath which he drank to the lowest dregs ; the derision of the Jews, but not the desertion of the Almighty God forsaking his Son, that he might never forsake you who were his enemies ; we may describe the blood issuing from his body, but not the waters of life streaming from the same source, oceans of spiritual and eternal blessings ; we may represent that blood covering his own body, but not how it sprinkles the soul of others, yea, sprinkles many nations ; we may paint the crown of

thorns he wore, but not the crown of glory which he purchased. Happy, happy were it for you if your faith had as lively views of a dying Saviour, as your imaginations often have of incomparably less important objects. In dying, Christ broke the power of sin and the sting of death, which he laid at his feet as so many monuments of his victory. In dying, he ceased not to pray for his murderers,—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” By shedding his blood, he made the sword of Divine justice return into its sheath—he established peace both in heaven and upon earth—he hath made you kings and priests unto God and his Father.

“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread,” &c.

The robe with which, I trust, every one here is clothed, is a robe of righteousness; the bread that is here broken to you, is the bread of that peace which passeth all understanding; the cup of blessing of which you here partake is a portion which no one taketh from you; the air which is breathed here is the air of paradise; the incense of prayer and intercession kindled here ascends as a sweet savour to the Lord; the songs which resound here have for their burden, “I have obtained mercy.” Look by faith to the cross of Christ. Here your souls will assuredly find sweet refreshment from Christ’s acceptable offering to God. “He is a hiding-place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, a shadow from the heat, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” At the sight of the cross you will no longer think of complaining of the greatness of your sufferings, for here you behold sufferings in comparison with which yours must be counted a light affliction which is but for a moment—here the righteous One suffers for you, the just

for the unjust. In the view of the cross, you will soon forget your distresses—for the love of God in Christ Jesus to you poor sinners will absorb all your thoughts. Under the cross you are prevented from supposing that some strange thing is happening unto you—the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord; and as the kingdom has been bestowed upon the Head, so will it also be upon the members. At the foot of the cross you are preserved from impatience; for you cannot but rejoice exceedingly that what you are enduring is only a temporal suffering, and not the curse which fell so dreadfully upon your surety. At the foot of the cross your grief will soon be lost in that joy and peace of God which drop from this tree of life into the ground of your hearts; and the foretaste you will here obtain of heaven will sweeten the troubles of this life as with the breath of the morning, and, before you are aware, will bring over you the feelings of a heavenly repose; yea, the cross itself will be transformed into such a medium between heaven and earth, that the most comforting thoughts shall descend into your souls, and the most grateful thoughts shall ascend from your souls to heaven, like those angels of God seen in a vision on the plains of Bethel by the solitary and benighted patriarch Jacob. While you dwell in this land of darkness and of discipline, you should make it your main business to secure an entrance into those happy mansions of immortality where all the holy desires of your hearts will be fully accomplished, where your resolutions will be no more subject to change, and where, in one word, you will be rendered perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. May you all, animated by these glorious hopes, give evidence that you are born of God, and that his seed remaineth in you, preserving you from sin, and producing the peaceable and salutary fruits of

righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God. Go in peace, and may the God of peace and of love be with you. Amen.

The communicants now retire from the table as before, and their places are filled by others. While the change is making, the congregation sings the next portion of

PSALM CIII. 3-5.

TABLE III.

The solemn ordinance which you are this day met to celebrate, is designed to recall to your remembrance an instance of the purest and most unmerited love that was ever manifested to the universe. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," said he whom this religious ordinance has for its object. The greatest proof of affection that men can give is to sacrifice their lives one for another. This is the height of the most heroic friendship. If such instances of love have ever been seen in the world, (for it is uncertain whether those that are alleged belong to history or fable,) when men believed that these had happened, they have celebrated them with transports of joy. Admiration of those who gave them warmed every breast, and their names have been enrolled in the annals of fame. Here we see much more than this—a Saviour sacrificing his life for the redemption of a rebellious and ruined world, a world which knew him not; nay, more, a world which rejected him, which hated him, which furiously persecuted him. Can you think of such love without astonishment? Is it not worthy to be held in everlasting remembrance? Surely the recollection of it ought to be precious to those who are personally concerned in it. You, communicants,

are the objects of that unparalleled love ; you form a part of that corrupt and miserable world which the Son of God came to save ; and it is that death which he endured for you, which a communion table is designed to represent to your affectionate and believing regards. There is exhibited to the eye of faith, yes, even to the eyes of sense, your gracious Redeemer delivered into the hands of wicked men, suffering the most ignominious and cruel punishment, expiring under unknown torments for your everlasting salvation ; for you he became flesh, for you he lived, for you he died ; all his wounds were inflicted for your iniquities. Must it not be delightful for you, who look for salvation through him alone, to recall to your remembrance this most consoling of all events.

Taking the apostle Paul for your guide, who, in his Epistle to the Romans, represents to you your Saviour's death in the most interesting view, as the most solid, the only foundation of your hopes of happiness through eternity, you should approach a communion table saying, with humble confidence, "The Lord is my light and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? the Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?"

To you he now proffers all the blessings of his mediation ; the forgiveness of sin, the renovation of the soul, the guidance, the support, and the consolations of his own Spirit, and an interest in his everlasting love.

Reject him, and you are poor, and wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and in want of all things. Receive him, and all things are yours. What is wanted is the bending of the human will, the winning of the human heart. In the cross of Christ you see everything that can satisfy the understanding, or attract the feelings. In that cross you see that sin is so evil, that it must be condemned by God, and you see that God is so

good, that the sinner must be welcomed by him if he comes in the name of Jesus. In that cross you see that God commends his love to mankind by every attribute which love, the love of God, ought to possess—a love in which there is nothing feeble, nothing foolish, nothing changeable; a love worthy of God. Coming to that cross, you see in your master, Jesus Christ, a kindness, a holiness, and a purity beyond all praise. Those who believe that cross, turn from sin. It secures, more than anything else, that the servants of God should serve him; it makes them serve him, as they ought to do, lovingly, and not in dread. It gives to the poor heart-broken sinner consolation; it creates hope in those who are despairing; it gives energy to those who are sunk in conscious impotence; and thus it has every provision which a divinely-appointed and divinely-invented remedy should have for the woes and the wickedness of mankind. Why do you love God? Why do you serve the Redeemer? This is through the influence of his cross in your hearts. You have seen the free and great salvation wrought out by that cross; you have seen what a High Priest he is to your souls through the blood of that cross. It is that cross which has brought you to be the disciples of Jesus Christ. You know the power of the cross. If any man could doubt it for a moment, let him look at himself. Why is he rescued? Why is he a follower of Jesus Christ? It is because the cross has conquered him. And what it has done for him, it can do for all. Is not this a strong consolation, a real and sure support, a certain and abiding trust? Well may you, then, trust in the name of the Lord! And as you are now to receive at the table of the Lord the emblems of his broken body and precious blood, may you at the same time feed in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving on Christ the Bread of life who came down from

heaven, and possess a joy which the world knoweth not of.

"The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread," &c.

What gratitude do you not owe, not only to the Redeemer by whom your salvation was purchased, but to that Holy Spirit by whom it is applied! How grateful should you be for the Spirit's grace in uniting you to Christ! How rich and noble are the privileges of God's children! God writes upon them his new name, a name of endearing affection, and of the highest honour. All who become the children of God, are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. You, who are the sons of God, are admitted to the rights and privileges of children. You have liberty of access to him in prayer and all gospel ordinances, and have your requests graciously heard and answered. And can you sufficiently admire this unexampled love of God towards you? On whatever side you view it, it passeth all understanding. Whether you consider the greatness and majesty of God who adopts you, the meanness and unworthiness of those whom he hath chosen, the blessed change that this adoption makes in your condition, the obstacles that lay in the way of your being raised to the dignity of God's children, or the price which it cost to obtain it for you, you will see abundant matter of astonishment and admiration, and the greatest reason to exclaim with the Psalmist, "Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered!"

Now, what was God's end in making you his children by regeneration and adoption? Without doubt, not merely

to give you occasion to admire and celebrate his goodness and love,—this is the least that you ought to do,—but it was to render you holy, to transform you into his own image, to attach you to his service and obedience by ties more strong and sacred than those of nature, and to engage you to fear, and love, and honour him as children ought to do a father. This is God's end and design in bringing you into a new and nearer relation with himself. This the Holy Scriptures everywhere teach you ; “ As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” He hath adopted you in Christ, that you should be holy and without blame before him in love. For this reason, your communion with God through Jesus Christ is represented to you as a motive to sanctification, and an obligation unto good works. “ If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as Jesus Christ walked.” Now, to contemplate the adopting love of God in a suitable manner, you must enter into its great design, and use vigorous and constant efforts to concur with its holy and glorious ends ; you must abandon sin in all its forms, and practise holiness in all its branches. God commands all his children to live suitably to their high and heavenly origin,—to their exalted and eternal hopes.

Consider this love of God with a view of resignation to his will in the greatest extremities. The first followers of Jesus Christ were exposed to the severest trials, were hated, and despised, and persecuted for the sake of Christ. If you are not called to endure such trials as they experienced, yet you have all your crosses and tribulations. This life is subject to innumerable evils ; the most elevated and fortunate of the sons of men are exposed to

calamities and afflictions ; death often makes sudden and unexpected breaches in families, which make them weep and mourn. In such situations, in the midst of all those evils that surround you, he who could teach you the secret not only of being resigned to the will of Providence, but of being calm and content, would teach you a science which you could never sufficiently esteem and cultivate. This science is not so difficult to acquire as some men think. In order to this, you have only to be well acquainted with yourselves to consider with more attention than you do that great love of God, that glorious prerogative of the sons of God with which he hath honoured you. Would you wish to possess something that will enable you to bid defiance to the world, and to support the losses and afflictions which you may be called to suffer ? Learn to know yourselves, to know the excellence of your origin, the glory of your condition, and the eternity of your existence. Learn to judge of yourselves, not by the relations you have with the world and society, but by the relation you have with God and Jesus Christ ; not by the employments, and riches, and titles you possess, but by the great and exalted hopes which religion sets before you ; not by the short time you have to live on earth, but by the infinite revolutions of ages which you are destined to pass in heaven ; not by those amusements and pleasures which you enjoy in the society of your acquaintance, and friends, and children, but by the eternal joys which are prepared for you in the presence of God and Christ, and in the company of saints and angels. It was this that supported Abraham when he was called to offer up his son Isaac in sacrifice to God. It was this that supported David in the trying extremities to which he was reduced. It was this that supported Job in the most afflicting circumstances in which a mere

man was ever placed. It was this that supported the first Christians in the most cruel and bloody persecutions. Beloved, consider what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! With this truth properly known and fully believed, there is no sorrow which religion cannot soften, no loss which it will not enable you to bear with courage, no enemy which it will not vanquish, and no song of triumph which it will not put into your mouth. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things you are more than conquerors through him that loved you. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." May God inspire you with these noble sentiments, to whom, with the Son and Holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever. Go in peace, and may the God of peace and of love be with you. Amen.

The communicants now leave the table, and their places are filled by others; the congregation, in the meantime, singing a further portion of

PSALM CIII. 5-8.

TABLE IV.

Communicants, it is scarcely possible carefully and prayerfully to read God's Holy Word without being forced to exclaim with the apostle, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How

unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" Still, if you take the world at large, you will find that the great majority entertain hard thoughts about God. They look upon God as their Judge, and they will speak of God as a great King; but they do not feel, and they do not enjoy, the thought of God as their Father. And yet there can be no happiness in religion until you can feel that you are reconciled to God, that he has become your Father through Jesus Christ.

God is love! He hath manifested his wonderful love to you in the gift of his Son—a gift of infinite value! You could never have loved God if he had not first loved you. "You have not chosen me," said Christ, "but I have chosen you." All who love God have been called according to his purpose. Who that duly considers this stupendous act of mercy, does not see that it presents a pledge equal to itself, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God?

Has God given you the greatest gift which he had to bestow—has he given you his own Son—has he given him to die for your redemption, and that, too, at a time when you were in rebellion against him—has God thus displayed the triumphs of his grace, and can you demand further evidence that even now all is well with his people? "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world!" Remember the price which your salvation cost the Redeemer, and never be ashamed to profess your obligations to him. Can you contemplate Christ in his wonderful person, as God manifest in the flesh, without being filled with the deepest admiration of his adorable majesty and condescending grace? Can you call to mind his astonishing love, in taking your nature and satisfying justice in your stead, without feeling the liveliest emotions of gratitude in your hearts? Can you

look at sin as it appears in the blood and agonies of the Son of God, and not feel a mixture of godly sorrow and spiritual joy? Can you view the sufferings of Christ as bringing glory to God and salvation to your souls, and not be induced to regard the sufferings as a solid foundation of hope in the Divine Presence, a powerful plea in your addresses to the throne of God, a source of the highest joy, and a subject of triumphant exultation? Surely if you are in a frame of mind at all suited to your character, you will be ready to break forth in the language of the Psalmist,—“Bless the Lord, O my soul; let all that is within me bless his holy name.” Oh, how happy would you be if you were ever cultivating such a grateful frame of spirit; it is a preparation for glory—a foretaste of heaven. The occasion of your present meeting invites you to this holy employment. The great object which this day presents to you, is that precious and immaculate victim, by whose blood your souls are redeemed from destruction. In the sacrament of the Supper you behold your Redeemer as bearing your iniquities, in his own body, on the accursed tree, and thereby effecting your reconciliation with your offended Sovereign. You should, then, approach the table of the Lord with sentiments of gratitude and praise. Let each believer say, “What shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts to me, especially for the blessings of redemption? What do I owe to the love of the Father in giving his Son for me, to the love of the Son in dying for me on the cross?” Christ must be precious to you now if you would have him so in the eternal world; and you must account it your supreme felicity to glorify him now, if you would hereafter join the chorus of saints and angels in ascribing salvation to God and to the Lamb for ever.

How wonderful is the compassion of Christ! In

whatever light the love of the Saviour is contemplated, it has heights which cannot be explored, and depths which cannot be fathomed. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same compassionate, all-sufficient Saviour. Every wound which he felt in his sacred body, and every pang which affected his holy soul, proclaims the strength and tenderness of his love. And now that he is enthroned in glory, he comes near you by the preaching of the gospel, and especially when seated at his holy table, with a heart full of kindness, and with hands full of blessings. Behold, he tenderly and affectionately calls on you to come to him; he assures you of a most hearty welcome, he beseeches you to become partakers of the unsearchable riches of his grace. Why, then, should you fear rejection from such a tender Saviour? Be encouraged to flee to him, though with a trembling heart; lay hold on this only hope; cleave to him amidst many fears, and answer every rising despondency with the words of Peter,—“Lord, to whom can I go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life.” It is your interest as well as your duty to give yourselves to him to be his subjects and worshippers; for this is the only way, and it is a sure way, to secure your happiness when you go down to the dust. Seeing you cannot keep alive your own souls, it is your wisdom, by obedient faith, to commit your souls to Jesus Christ, who is able to love and keep them alive for ever. Christ has said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.”

“The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed,” &c.

Communicants, it was the satisfaction and triumph of Christ in his sufferings, that he should have a church in the world, and that those who were given him from eternity, should, in the fulness of time, be gathered into

him. Let the love of Christ, then, in dying for you, in rising again, and in interceding for you at the right hand of God, constrain you to live no longer to yourselves. Let his power captivate your thoughts, your desires, your affections, to his obedience. He is still on terms of reconciliation with you ; he is still offering to you the richest blessings of his grace ; stretching out to you the arms of his love ; inviting you to come unto him that you may find rest to your souls. All the titles which the Scripture gives him, all the works that it ascribes to him, are so many proofs that he possesseth an all-sufficiency of grace, of merit, and of gifts, to satisfy all your holy desires. In him there is a fulness of wisdom to instruct you ; a fulness of merit to procure salvation for you ; a fulness of mercy to pardon you ; a fulness of holiness to be your example ; a fulness of the Holy Spirit to sanctify you ; a fulness of power to protect you, to defend you, and to save you eternally, His love is stronger than death, and his power is almighty.

Warrantably to believe yourselves the true disciples of Jesus Christ, it is not enough to have the first lineaments of the new man drawn on your hearts, to have acquired the principles of Christian virtues, but your graces and virtues must grow and gather strength from day to day ; you must be active and assiduous in all good works. Consider the engagements you have come under in the presence of God, and seriously and unremittingly apply yourselves to make good what your hearts and your outward profession have spoken. And what are the engagements into which you have religiously entered ? The most natural and reasonable in the world. Engagements which you were under from the first moment of your existence, even when your mouth could not utter them. You have engaged to consecrate yourselves to God your

Creator, your Preserver, your Redeemer, and your Judge. You have engaged to renounce ungodliness and worldly lust, and to live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world. These are sacred engagements, and they contain nothing inconsistent with the purest light of reason, and the dictates of a good conscience. Be assured, that in fulfilling your engagements, you will taste an inward joy and satisfaction which worldly occupations and pleasures cannot bestow ; for God hath made your present happiness to consist in the accomplishment of your present duties. You will experience an inexpressible delight in binding more closely the bonds that unite you to Christ, to whom you have devoted yourselves ; to him who shed his blood to save you, who intercedes for you with his Father, and who is earnestly desirous of making you partakers of his own glory. The world will tempt you to go astray from Christ's little flock ; it will attack you by its pleasures, its maxims, its examples and its railleries. Oppose to these enemies of your salvation the means of defence which Christ prescribes against temptation,—vigilance and prayer ; oppose to them the law of God, and peace of conscience, and good hope and confidence in God in the day of death ; oppose to them the felicity and glory reserved in heaven for the righteous in the presence of your Saviour and your God ; oppose to them the vows which you have made at a communion table. Say to yourselves, say to others, I have sworn and will perform it, that I will keep the righteous judgments of my God. The word, sacraments, instructions, meditation, prayer, communion with God, and the intercession of Christ, these are now the sources of your joy, the softeners of your sorrows, the supports of your faith and hope. But you should not so satisfy yourselves with these wilderness

enjoyments as to think of building tabernacles here ; you should long to be introduced into the heavenly Canaan, to contemplate God face to face, and to receive the effusions of his love immediately from himself. You should habitually prepare for that glorious period when, your faith changed into vision, your hope into enjoyment, and all your graces and virtues made perfect, shall consummate and immortalise your felicity. Go in peace, and may the God of peace and of love be with you. Amen.

PSALM CIII. 8-11.

TABLE V.

Intending communicants, the love of Christ is the most interesting subject that can be presented to the contemplation of the human mind. History, science, philosophy, and romance, can furnish nothing like it to create the interest which it excites. And the reason of the difference is this,—the influence, the effects of Christ's love are everlasting. The former awaken your attention only as to this world, but the love of Christ unveils eternity, and points out the glories of that heaven to which it will shortly introduce its recipients.

The blessings of Christ's love are needful, invaluable, immensely abundant, infinitely enriching, and everlasting. The love of Christ is like the ocean. In all ages men have been taking from its waters, yet the ocean remains full as ever ; so men in all ages have been drinking of the stream of Christ's love, yet there remains a fulness that can never be diminished.

The love of Christ is manifested by his voluntary engagement to become the surety of guilty and ruined man—entering into their circumstances, enduring the penalty of the law, and fulfilling all the great purposes of his

mission to effectuate man's redemption. "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it."

This love is described by height and length, and depth and breadth : high as heaven above, to which it exalts us ; deep as hell beneath, from which it saves us ; long and broad as our spacious world, and lasting as eternity.

Strong is the love of man to man, and under the influence of grace, mutual Christian love shall exist for ever. Great is the benevolence of angels ; they joy over one sinner that repenteth, are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. But the love of Christ is the love of God our Saviour.

In order to form some faint idea of the boundless extent of Christ's love, consider to what degree he carried it. You see it written in shining characters in his birth, in his life, and in his death.

Christ's love appears in offering himself as a sacrifice for sin, which involved unparalleled sufferings and an ignominious death. "Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin."

"The wages of sin is death ;" and his love shrank not from the full and awful satisfaction required. It was death in the sinner's place.

Behold him in Gethsemane, and on the cross ! The prince of this world cometh ! He is sore amazed ! "Tis the hour and power of darkness !" He sorrows unto death. An invisible hand smites him. The sword begins to pierce through his heart. He speaks in fear and agony ; "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." What must have been the distractions of his mind, the rendings of his heart ?

Follow him to Golgotha, and behold him on the cross. See his sufferings ! see his shame ! Then was the prophecy fulfilled—"I am poured out like water, and all my bones

are out of joint;”—“Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.” This language expresses the extremity of his sufferings. It is no indication of unwillingness or retraction. No! on that cross he is resigned and calm; but determined to win the spoils, while he is indifferent to the horrors of crucifixion. Though drowned in sorrow, he is full of majesty. He prays for the forgiveness of his murderers. He throws open the gates of paradise to a malefactor. And then he begins to die. The vail rends! The rocks shiver! The sun darkens! The earth trembles! The grave yawns! The dead are startled to life! And now he who had not opened his mouth for a sigh or a groan, utters his bitter complaint! It is not at man; he can destroy him! It is not at hell; he defies it! oh, what is that complaint? It is the hiding of his Father’s face. “My God! my God! why forsakest thou me!”

Can you comprehend these mysteries—the last mysterious agony—the complaint of being forsaken of God? You feel you cannot. They transcend all your thoughts; and the love which made him stoop to them is therefore love which passeth knowledge. Oh unparalleled love! His love was mercy. It turns away from man the wrath of God. It turns the curse into a blessing. It gives man access to God, and communion with him. It absolves all his sins, and delivers him from all condemnation. It renews his nature, causing him to resemble God. It invests him with the fellowship of the saints, the love of the Almighty Father, and the hope that is laid up in heaven. It gives him the protection of Omnipotence, the guardianship of angels, triumph in death, and admission

to heaven. "All things are yours." God is now able to make all grace to abound to you. "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." What a ground of hope for the penitent sinner ! What a source of joy for believers.

The Lord Jesus, "the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and, when he had given thanks, as has been done in his name, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me.

"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, shed for the remission of the sins of many ; drink ye all of it. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."

The service of God is not an empty one. It produces great bliss in this life, and it shall be crowned with everlasting honours. How cheering was this truth to the apostles amid their conflicts ! How it stimulated them to perseverance. You have had the happiness to be born and brought up in the school of Christ, and ought, therefore, to know and to feel the infinite obligations under which you lie to him ; and your partaking of the holy sacrament signifies that you are convinced of your obligations, and determined, in reliance on the grace of Christ, faithfully to fulfil them.

You were by nature enemies to God, children of wrath, and dead in trespasses and sins. This consideration ought to render you humble all the days of your life. But here is ground of consolation : when you were in this miserable and helpless condition, Jesus Christ loved you, and came to wash you from your sins in his own blood. He loved you with an everlasting love, with a love which had no bounds.

Though you were able to figure in your minds the warmest affection that ever operated in the human heart, it would be cold in comparison of the love of Christ. Some men have exposed themselves to death for the sake of their country, and some have voluntarily relinquished dignities and honours, but Jesus Christ hath done incomparably more than all that ; he loved you, and washed you in his blood, not only when you sought him not, but when you were in open rebellion against him.

When the Jews saw Jesus weeping at the grave of Lazarus, they said, "See how he loved him ;" and have not you much better reason to apply these words to yourselves, when Jesus Christ hath washed you from your sin in his own blood ? You should no more ask, with the prophet Isaiah, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah ;" you should no more say, "Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat ?" Do you not recognise by these marks Jesus Christ your Saviour ? Do you not see that his blood was shed to purify you from all iniquity ?

Consider that the blood of Christ washes your souls in a spiritual manner, by the application of it to your hearts. Rely not on human means for your purification from the stains of sin ; for the blood of Christ is the only fountain effectual for this purpose. Have daily recourse to it by faith, which purifieth the heart ; for it will avail you nothing that Jesus shed his blood, if application of it is not made to purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. Faith renders you partakers of the merit of Christ's death, and receives pardon and sanctification, which are offered to you only through his atonement and intercession. Let love also soften and inflame your hearts. Without this grace, no sacrifice which you

present to God is accepted by him. It is recorded in the Gospel of a penitent woman, that she loved much, because many sins were forgiven her; and shall not you love Jesus Christ, who has testified to you the most transcendent love? Shall not you prefer him to all things? Shall not you obey his precepts, and expose yourselves, after the example of his first and faithful followers, to the contempt and reproach of the world, rather than abandon the hopes of the gospel, and the grand interests of your salvation.

Hath Christ made you "priests and kings unto God?" You ought to be anxiously concerned to act up to the dignity of those exalted characters,—to see to it that you are entirely devoted to God, to his service and glory, as all Christians are sacredly bound to be. But many who bear the Christian name, are priests, not of God, but of the world and mammon. In place of directing their views to heaven, they turn them to the world; they pursue its profits and its pleasures, and conform themselves to its maxims. It is an idol which multitudes serve; but all its votaries will at last find it to be a false and impotent god.

Hath Christ made you kings? Then you will aspire at nothing so much as victory over all his and your enemies. Worthily supporting your royal dignity, you will look, "not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal." "Risen with Christ, you will seek the things which are above," and shew that you have learned to overcome the temptations of Satan, the allurements of the world, and the solicitations of the flesh. If those dignities oblige you to perform great duties, be assured they are more honourable in the sight of God than the highest worldly preferments. You are kings and priests, that is, persons of the most exalted and use-

ful characters. It is true most people judge otherwise, because your glory is moral or spiritual, and the men of the world esteem only what strikes their outward senses. They may now despise you, but the day is approaching when they will be forced, to their utter confusion and shame, to change their sentiments of them who now fear God and keep his commandments.

From this solemn day, you should begin to execute the functions of kings and priests, by restraining your evil and rebellious passions, and by offering unto God the sacrifices of righteousness, of broken and contrite hearts, which he will not despise. But perhaps you will say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" "when we would do good, evil is present with us." But have you forgotten that the grace which brought you up out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set your feet upon a rock, will establish your goings? Have you forgotten that the Christian can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him? You have all necessary arms, all necessary assistance, for fighting the good fight, and for finishing your course with joy. You have the "preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," the succours of prayer, and, above all, the victorious grace of the Spirit. Therefore boldly, and fearlessly, and incessantly oppose all the enemies of God and of your salvation, till at last you sing that triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; thanks be unto God which giveth me the victory through Jesus Christ," who hath washed me in his blood, and put into my mouth songs of salvation.

Go now from the table of the Lord, and may the God of love and peace be with you. Amen.

If all intending communicants have now had access to the table, the presiding minister, having previously returned to the pulpit, invites the congregation to join in praising God.

Let us, after the example of Jesus and his disciples when he instituted this ordinance, conclude the solemn service with a hymn of praise.

PARAPHRASE lxxv. 5.

The minister then gives his

EXHORTATION, OR CONCLUDING ADDRESS.

You have this day professed a good profession before many witnesses. You have complied with the dying command of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. You have assembled in his house of prayer; you have eaten bread and drunk wine in remembrance of him. You have professed to renew your vows of fidelity to him and to his cause, and in the most solemn manner expressed your gratitude and attachment to him,—your gratitude for the matchless love which he has manifested to you and to a guilty world; your attachment, as being your truest Friend and most bountiful Benefactor.

In so doing, you have acted most consistently with the Christian character; you have observed that ordinance which has always been considered the highest festival in the Christian Church; you have done what the disciples of Jesus have never failed to do, and what his faithful followers till the end of time will continue to do; you have

done what you can to keep up the remembrance of his sufferings and death among his people till the end of the world.

You have professed publicly your attachment to the Saviour before many witnesses. There have been many witnessing your conduct upon earth ; your brethren with whom you are assembled have been witnesses of what you have done. The angels in heaven have observed your conduct. But he who is infinitely exalted above men and angels, above principalities and powers, even he who is the great Master of the feast, has observed the testimony which you have borne to him and to his cause. He has witnessed not only the outward conduct of those who have made this profession, but he has witnessed the state, the feeling of heart, with which every individual has approached his table. He has witnessed the love to him which has glowed in the breasts of the humble believers. He has marked the distress which such have felt that their love was so cold, and their gratitude so far below what they would have wished, and what they know it should have been. He has sympathised with such, and will communicate to them those supplies of grace and of spiritual life of which he sees they stand in need. He has also witnessed the coldness and formality of those who have approached this ordinance from unworthy motives ; and unless these persons seek his grace, his mercy, and forgiveness, he will certainly, either here or hereafter, chastise them for their wickedness and hypocrisy.

To those of you who have approached this table with much fear, and with a deep sense of unworthiness, yet with a true desire to do homage to the Saviour, and to renew your covenant with him, that you will willingly and gratefully accept of the great salvation which he has purchased for you upon his own terms, this must indeed

have been a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. You must now be feeling the blessedness of those who are in covenant with God, of those to whom God imputeth not sin ; you must be blessing God in your hearts that you can indeed look up to him as a reconciled Father instead of an angry Judge ; that you can now say with confidence, "See, God my shield, look on the face of thine Anointed." You rejoice in the knowledge that a perfect righteousness has been wrought out for you, and that through grace you have been enabled to trust in it. Your heart rejoices in the knowledge that your sins have been imputed unto Christ, and that his righteousness is imputed unto you ; that he has borne the wrath and curse of God which was due for your sins, and that you are now viewed as righteous on account of what he has done and suffered for you.

Although, however, this be your privilege, and this the gracious state to which you have been raised, you must not allow yourselves to be at ease in Zion. You have still a great warfare to accomplish against enemies from without, and against remaining corruption from within.

Every snare which Satan can lay will be laid for you, and unless you be constantly looking unto Jesus, and receiving out of that fulness which is in him, and grace for grace, you will certainly be overcome. He will try you in prosperity ; he will tempt you to think that your mountain stands strong, and that you shall never be moved, and therefore that you need not be constantly acknowledging dependence and seeking support from God. He will try you in adversity ; he will tempt you to think that God has forgotten you, and that you have no cause to be grateful to him. He will try you by exhibiting to you the evil conduct of others, and leading you to

compare yourselves with them, instead of trying yourselves by the pure and holy law of God, and thus lead you to be satisfied with low attainments in Christian holiness. He will tempt you to look upon sin as less offensive unto God than the Scriptures declare it to be; and flatter you with the hope of impunity though you indulge in it,—just as he said to our first parents, that they would not surely die although they transgressed God's law. He will try you by exciting in you carnal affections—covetous, malignant, and envious dispositions. He will try you by making you have little relish for the ordinances of religion, that he may prevail upon you to give an irregular and careless attendance upon them. Even when engaged in religious duties, he will try to withdraw your minds from the solemn exercises in which you are engaged, and lead you to render unto God upon such occasions only the service of the lips, instead of the homage of the heart. Let me entreat you, therefore, to watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. Never forget that you have an all-sufficient Saviour, to whom, in every emergency, you may look up with perfect confidence; and if you seek his grace and protection, he will support and deliver you in the season of temptation.

You must ever bear in mind that you have this day publicly and solemnly vowed to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh; to live no longer to yourselves, but unto Christ, who died for you; and that if you wilfully indulge in sin, you act in direct opposition to the profession you have made. You do dishonour to the Saviour you profess to love—you bring a reproach upon his religion—you throw a stumbling-block in the way of weak Christians—you give cause to the enemies of the cross of Christ to exult and to blaspheme.

Ever remember you are enlisted in the service of Christ ; that your banner now is the cross, and you must be willing, in every circumstance and situation of life, willingly to bear the cross for him who died on the cross for you. Consider every trial as nothing, compared to what your sins have deserved.

In regard to yourselves, if you are not vigilant and watchful, consider how you will mar and destroy your own comfort and peace of mind—that joy in the Holy Ghost—that peace of conscience which passes all understanding, which is the portion of believers in this life, and which is an earnest or foretaste of the blessedness of the redeemed in heaven. It is distressing to see how much the comfort and happiness of the children of God in this world are impaired by their own carelessness and inattention—by their want of Christian fortitude and holy resolution—by their want of watchfulness and prayer—by their want of earnest and persevering application at a throne of grace, for the strength, the assistance, and direction of which they stand in need, to enable them to advance in their way heavenward, to walk in the narrow way that leadeth unto life.

It is not enough that spiritual life be infused into our souls—that life must be cherished and supported ; and he alone who is the Author of it can give it the support of which it stands in need ; which support he is pleased to communicate through means of those ordinances which God has appointed for this purpose, which ordinances are—the word, the sacraments, and prayer. If we do not wait upon God regularly in these ordinances, we shall never make progress in the spiritual life, nor shall we have that comfort, that joy and peace in believing, which is the peculiar blessedness of the confirmed Christian. Indeed, if you have no longings after the ordinances of

the gospel, it is a proof that there is no spiritual life in you. Never rest satisfied, therefore, till you feel in some measure like the Psalmist, when he says : " How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts ; our souls long, yea, even faint, for thy courts ! " The true believer is never satisfied with his present attainments. He feels that as he advances in grace he increases in happiness, as he is enabled to render unto God a more cheerful and a more spiritual service ; therefore, like the apostle, " forgetting the things which are behind, he reaches forth to those which are before," he presses " on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

To those of you who have approached the sacred ordinance for unworthy or improper motives, I would say, with all the earnestness, with all the affectionate concern and anxiety of one who feels deeply for your best, your eternal interests, consider what you have been doing—consider what comfort you might have felt, what spiritual benefit you might have received from this ordinance, and how little of either you have experienced. Nay, I will say, what discomfort, if you thought at all, you have felt while engaged in this ordinance. If you do not love the Saviour—if you do not appreciate that salvation which he has purchased, and if you are not anxiously desirous to have an interest in it—you must have felt the whole of this solemnity, so far as you are personally concerned in it, to be only a solemn mockery. You must have felt that you could not be acceptable guests at the table of the Lord, if you were not resolved, under grace, in your future lives to honour and obey him.

The very circumstance, however, of your coming to this ordinance is a proof that you are not altogether insensible of the value of the gospel of Christ. It shews that you think it respectable to be considered of the

number of his disciples. You thus give a strong testimony to the truth of the Christian religion. You shew that even those who have not yet felt their own personal need of it admit that the Saviour should be honoured, and that blessed are they who do believe in him, and trust to him for salvation. I trust, therefore, that even to you this ordinance may yet be sanctified. You may, by being led to consider what you should be, and to what you might attain, be led, by God's grace, to be no longer formal, but fervent worshippers. You may be led to bemoan your past carelessness and indifference, and to seek, with unwavering confidence, the convincing, the enlightening, the pardoning, the saving, and the sanctifying influences of that Spirit who can subdue every spiritual enemy either from within or from without; and having found grace to believe in Christ, and to submit to him in all things, you may yet be enabled, by another solemnity of this sort, to come forth with all your graces in lively exercise—filled with faith, having a godly sorrow for sin, an ardent love for the Saviour, and a sincere determination to take his yoke upon you, and to devote yourselves unreservedly to him, and thus you shall be allowed to hold sweet fellowship and communion with him, and be made to partake of all his benefits, to your spiritual improvement and growth in grace.

But that you may expect, or even hope, for such blessings, you must act as Christ has directed you in the Gospel. You must pray to him, who is exalted at God's right hand, for the purpose of giving repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins, to give you a godly sorrow for all your past offences, and especially for the sin of professing to love him, when, in truth, you have no true regard for him—you must wait upon him stately in the courts of his house—you must implore of God,

without ceasing, that Christ may be revealed in your soul the hope of glory—that he may, indeed, become precious to you—that you may be made to see, that unless you are interested in his salvation you must perish; and that grace may be given you to persevere in seeking till you find, which every one who seeks as directed in the Gospel is sure to do.

This, surely, is as easy terms as your warmest friend could prescribe. Do we expect any favour from an earthly friend on easier terms than to ask and it shall be given unto us? And yet, strange to say, that although pardon of sin and eternal life, through Jesus Christ, be offered on these terms, many will not be at the pains to comply with them; what, then, can such expect to remain for them “but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.” Let me beseech you to think of these easy terms, and to comply with them, and you shall “find peace and rest to your souls.” Be not so foolish and unwise as to perish in this land of gospel light, when a free salvation is offered to you without money and without price.

To some of you this may be the last of your communion Sabbaths here. You may have taken your last spiritual repast in the house of ordinances, and the hour of your departure may be nigh. Let this thought go with you to your dwellings, and there make you do what you can to gather up the fragments of time, and strength, and opportunity which yet remain with you, for setting your house in order, and for going out to meet the bridegroom when he comes.

Let those, too, who enjoy the health, the vigour, and the hopes of youth and manhood, remember the obligations which become their period of life, and to which they have again pledged themselves by the part they

have acted in the proceedings of this day. See that you reflect the image of those glories which the eye of faith has seen this day. Let men take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and have seen the glory of his Name.

To young communicants, who have this day for the first time publicly avowed discipleship to Jesus, by eating bread and drinking wine in obedience to his command, I would say, Having put your hand to the plough, look not back; for if ye do, God will have no pleasure in you. The Scripture says expressly, "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." That you may persevere in the good course you have begun—that you may be true and faithful to the Master in whose service you have entered, the greatest vigilance and self-denial on your part will be necessary.

You have, in a manner, broken off entirely all communion with Satan, and with the unfruitful works of darkness—you have taken a decided part on the side of the Saviour. Your spiritual adversary cannot view this with indifference—he will have all his emissaries employed to seduce you from the service of the gracious Master under whose banners you are now engaged to fight, the success of whose kingdom is to be the overthrow of his own. Every temptation which he can present to seduce you will be employed, and you must put on the whole armour of God, that you may be enabled to withstand in the evil day. One of the first that he may employ, and perhaps he has been employing it already, may be to persuade you that you have received no benefit from this ordinance—that you do not feel yourselves more attached to the Saviour than before engaging in this service, and why observe such ordinances?

Whatever you may feel, however, you have been complying with a positive commandment of your Saviour, and you have been seeking communion with him ; and if you have not been cherishing some enemy to him in your bosom ; if you have not been harbouring some beloved sin, which you are not resolved to quit, you must have been acceptable guests, and spiritual benefit has been communicated to your souls, whether you have been sensible of it or not. This spiritual benefit will be discovered by you in due time, by a growing love to the Saviour, a growing hatred to sin, a growing regard for God's commandments, a growing relish for ordinances, and a growing desire for heaven and eternal communion and fellowship with the Saviour.

It is a great mistake to suppose that an immediate perceptible change is to be wrought upon us by the observance of any ordinance. It is generally in the spiritual as in the natural world—the growth of grace in the soul is gradual, and often hardly perceptible. This is beautifully explained by our Saviour in two parables in the 4th chapter of Mark, the 26th and following verses. He said, “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.” The following parable of the grain of mustard seed illustrates the same thing ; the sure, though imperceptible growth of grace in the soul. Be not discouraged, therefore, though your experience may not answer your expectations ; you had formed mistaken views of the benefits which Christ communicates in his ordinances.

I would just say, in conclusion, to all of you, endeavour

to maintain at all times upon your minds a sense of the high rank you now hold. Remember that you are no longer strangers and pilgrims, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Consider the holy order to which you belong. Consider the glorious privileges to which you are entitled. You now no longer walk before God with fearful apprehensions of deserved punishment, but you look up to him as adopted children, and can address him by the endearing epithet of Father. You feel confident that your whole lot and destiny is fixed by him—you cheerfully acquiesce in all his appointments, whether prosperous or adverse, knowing assuredly that he ordereth all things for good to them that love him, and are the called according to his purpose; and surely your great and prevailing desire now is, that you may be enabled in everything to act as it becomes the children of God, and the disciples of Christ. You will not only be solicitous to maintain upon your minds a constant fear of offending him; but you will feel a warm, a heartfelt interest in supporting his cause, which is that of truth and righteousness, by every means in your power. Personal holiness—family religion—Christian conversation—anxiety for the instruction of others—zeal for the propagation of the gospel, and for the support of every Christian ordinance and institution, will be the great aim and object of your lives.

Although I have still much to lament amongst you—although I still see in many of you a great indifference about ordinances, a great want of attention to the duties of religion; nay, though I even witness much open wickedness prevailing amongst you, yet, at the same time, I think I see a gradual improvement going on. I every year see persons who have been formerly forgetful of duty beginning to pay attention to it; and amongst the

young, especially, I see a very general desire to avow discipleship to Jesus. I humbly trust that these are all indications that God by his Spirit is accompanying the ministrations of the gospel, and rendering them effectual for turning men from the folly of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; and that we shall still be cheered with an increasing attention to the gospel, till we shall see an altar in every heart, and a temple in every house; which may God in his mercy speedily grant, and to his name be the praise. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER THE COMMUNION.

O almighty and most merciful Father! thou art God over all and blessed for ever. Thy glory transcends all our conceptions, and thy tender mercies are over all thy works. We desire, with all thankfulness of heart, to bless and praise thy holy name, for the numberless instances of thy loving-kindness and tender mercy bestowed upon us, especially for that amazing instance of thy love in the redemption of the world by the precious blood of Christ.

We bless thee, O God, for instituting the holy sacrament of the Supper, to keep up the remembrance of the exceeding love of our Saviour in thus dying for us, and for admitting us, who are wicked and sinful creatures, to be guests at his holy table, and thereby rendered partakers of the great and precious benefits promised to those who are clothed with the wedding-garment. Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him? or what are we that thou shouldst so regard us? Great is thy name, O God, and great is thy mercy; thy goodness is unbounded. Oh, let the consideration of these thy mercies sink deep into our hearts, and bring forth in us the fruits of a sin-

cere love to thee, and a hearty zeal for thy service, that so our returns of duty and obedience may in some measure answer the great means of thy grace, and bear some proportion to those things which thou hast done for us. Oh, do thou vouchsafe such a measure of thy grace and heavenly Spirit as may mortify and subdue in our corrupt hearts whatsoever exalts itself against thy blessed will ; and grant that we may walk before thee in all meekness, and humility, and patience, in a perfect submission to thy blessed will, and in cheerful and ready obedience to all thy commandments. O Lord, may it be the earnest and sincere desire of our souls to be made conformable to thy laws, and to obtain thy favour and love. Keep us ever mindful of thy vows, which are upon us, and enable us to live as becomes thy redeemed people. Lord preserve us by thy grace, that we may never return again to folly. Without thy restraining grace, even the least temptation will be able to baffle our strongest resolutions. But in thee is our trust ; let us not be confounded. Be thou our help in every time of need, our Saviour and mighty deliverer ; let thy grace and thy Holy Spirit be always present with us, to guide and direct us in all our steps, to strengthen and assist us under our many weaknesses and infirmities, and to conduct us safely amid all the trials and temptations with which we may be visited in this life ; that when we have fought the good fight, and finished our course, we may obtain that crown of righteousness which thou hast promised to them that persevere unto the end.

We pray, O Lord, that if any have this day unwarrantably approached thy holy table, not having the wedding garment, destitute of the qualifications required of all who are admitted to be guests in thy banqueting-house—we pray that thou wouldst have mercy on,

such, and graciously forgive the sins which they have presumptuously committed against thee. May they flee unto thee the Fountain of all goodness. Let thy merciful ears be open to their prayers, and spare them ; suffer not thine anger to rise against them, nor cast them away in thy displeasure.

We confess that sin is mingled even with our most holy services. Make us more and more sensible that the best of our duties will not save us, but that the least of our sins is sufficient to damn us ; our own righteousness do as filthy rags defile us, and our duties do witness against us. Our repentance needs pardon, and our tears require washing. Hide thy face from our sins, and blot out all our iniquities. May we live by faith in Christ our righteousness ; in him may we die, possessing the hope that gladdens the hearts of his people in the prospect of dissolution, and at the hour of death ; in him may we arise and appear glorious when he comes to be glorified in all them that believe, to the admiration of elect angels, and to the utter confusion and extreme horror of ungodly men.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst sustain the feeble steps of the aged, and of those who may have this day for the last time taken their places at thy holy table. May they remain faithful in the performance of their vows and holy resolutions to the end ; and when their hearts faint and fail them, in the last moments of their earthly pilgrimage, may their spirits be received into thy blessed presence, where they shall obtain fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

May all who are labouring under the burden of many infirmities, and those who are in the health and vigour of life, express their gratitude to thee for the privilege they have enjoyed of recalling to their remembrance their

unspeakable obligations to redeeming love. May they give increasing diligence in the work of preparation for death, judgment, and eternity. May they remember their covenant vows, perform their covenant duties, and reap their covenant blessings.

We pray especially for the young, who have this day for the first time approached the Saviour's table. Accept of that surrender which they have made of themselves to thy service. Make them more sensible of thy love, and more thankful for its blessed effects. Let the Spirit of grace dwell in them as the Spirit of holiness. May they serve thee in righteousness and holiness all the days of their life.

Bless the elders of this congregation, and bountifully reward them for their labours of love among this people. May they be clean who bear the vessels of the Lord. May their steps be ordered by thee. To thee may they defer all their plans and enterprises. May they acknowledge thee in all their ways.

Be very gracious, O God, to those who by sickness, infirmity, or other unavoidable causes, have been prevented from waiting upon thee this day in thy house of prayer, and testifying their love to the Saviour at a communion table. Visit them with the riches and consolations of thy grace. Feed their souls with the bread of life, and dispose them to hunger and thirst after righteousness. May all who are in any respect connected with this assembly of thy people be united to thee by a true and living faith. Bless all who have this day been with thee on the mount of ordinances throughout the world. May their souls rejoice in thee the God of their salvation. Bless thy ministering servants who have assisted us on this solemn occasion. May their piety be exalted, and their success be ever increasing. Enable all

of us, O Lord, who are called to minister at thy altar to be faithful in the discharge of the sacred duties assigned to us ; and may the consciousness of having constantly laboured for the spiritual welfare of our people, and the hope that we have not laboured in vain, be the sweetest consolation to us in the evening of our days. May thy Spirit be with him who is to direct our thoughts this evening. Enable us to sing to thy praise with melody in our hearts. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Be with us during the interval of public worship, and bring us again in peace and safety to thy house of prayer. All that we ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

PSALM XCVIII. 1-5.

THE BLESSING.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit, abide with you, and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, even for evermore. Amen.

SABBATH EVENING.

PSALM CXVI. 1-6.

O Almighty God, we desire to come into thy presence with hearts overflowing with gratitude that such a distinguished privilege is granted to us. We are filled with wonder and astonishment that we, who are sinful dust and ashes, should be permitted to address thee, thou who art the majesty of heaven and of earth. Surely, O Lord,

thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as our ways, else, instead of being permitted to adore thy goodness, and to implore thy mercy on earth, we should at this moment have been deploring our miserable condition in that place where thou hast forgotten to be gracious, and where thy mercy is gone for ever.

Oh that we were enabled more justly to appreciate thy goodness,—that we were made truly to feel the unutterable obligations under which we lie unto thee our God,—that thus our souls, and all that is within us, might be stirred up to magnify and bless thy holy name.

Early, O Lord, were we cast upon thy care ; innumerable are the blessings which thou hast conferred upon us. We will, therefore, shew forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night. Our tongues shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise, all the day long. Thou art our shield and our defence, thou hast been our refuge in the day of trouble. When we have been in danger, thou hast been our protector ; when we have been in sickness, thou hast restored us ; when we have been in sorrow, thou hast sent us consolation. Thou hast been the hiding place of thy people in all generations. All our temporal wants have been abundantly supplied, thou hast made the out-goings of the morning and of the evening to rejoice over us.

Whilst, however, O Lord, we praise thee for the ample provision which thou hast made for the support and comfort of our bodies, we would, with peculiar gratitude, adore and magnify thy name for the rich provision which thou hast made for our immortal souls. By nature we are the children of wrath, estranged from God, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. We have added to our original guilt innumerable actual transgressions ; clothed in our own righteousness, we cannot be justified

in thy sight. But we rejoice that there is a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. We rejoice that we have seen the predictions fulfilled—That the people that sit in darkness shall see a great light; that upon them that dwell in the land of the shadow of death the light shall shine. “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”

We pray, O Lord, that we may be made seriously to consider, and deeply to feel, the condition in which we are placed by the appearance of the Son of God in the world. May we consider that we are no longer our own, but that we are bought with a price, even the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, and that henceforward we ought no longer to live to ourselves, but unto Jesus Christ who died for us.

We, O Lord, lament our own insufficiency to fulfil thy will, and we feel the force of these words, “No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him.” We pray thee, therefore, O Lord, to draw us and we will run after thee. Look down, O God of mercy, upon us, and be graciously pleased to make thy grace sufficient for us, and to perfect strength in our weakness. Make us to see our sins in all their deformity. Convince the self-righteous, that they are guilty, grant pardon to the penitent, humble the proud, raise the bowed down, may the mourners in Zion be comforted. May those who hunger and thirst after righteousness be filled. May we consider ourselves here only as pilgrims and strangers, and may the salvation of our souls appear unto

all of us to be the one thing needful, to be the only truly important concern to which our attention can be directed. And we pray, O Lord, that we may be led by thy grace to look for this salvation where it is really to be found. May we be convinced that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of sinners. May we, therefore, be enabled to believe in Christ with our whole hearts, and to comply with all the requisitions of the gospel. May we be constantly seeking the way to Zion with our faces thitherward. May we be diligent in the use of all those means of grace with which we are favoured. May we wait upon thee in the ordinances of thine appointment.

We acknowledge, O Lord our God, with all thankfulness of heart, thy great goodness and mercy vouchsafed to thy people in this place, in giving them an opportunity this day of approaching thy holy table, and disposing their minds to remember the infinite love of their crucified Saviour. We humbly pray that they may obtain all the benefits of his sufferings and death, to their great and endless comfort. But all glory be to thee, O gracious God, that thou hast impressed a sense of this duty upon their minds.

Glory be to thee for the fresh supplies of grace they have received at thy hand—glory be to thee for those comfortable promises thou hast given them of pardon and forgiveness—glory be to thee, O Lord God Almighty, for that peace thou hast restored to their souls; for those resolutions thou hast wrought in them to continue in thy service to the end of their life. Graciously grant that their future lives and conversations may be suitable to the profession they have made; that they may walk worthy of the gospel of Christ, and adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things. Let them never crucify the Son of God afresh, nor put him to an open shame. May

they not be of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of their souls.

And we pray, O Lord, that all those who have this day been partakers with us of the memorials of Christ's dying love may henceforth be filled with thy grace.

Be graciously present with us at this time. When we engage in the solemn services of thy house, suffer not idle thoughts and worldly cares to intrude into our minds, and to divert our attention from the important exercises in which we are employed ; but may we be enabled to worship thee, thou who art a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. May we ever remember that thy all-penetrating eye is upon us, that thou knowest how each of us is employed, whether we be yielding only an outward attendance upon the ordinances of thy appointment, or whether we are endeavouring with sincerity, although with much imperfection, to render unto thee a sincere and an undivided service.

Assist us, O Lord, as we are now to be employed in speaking and in hearing from thy Word ; and do thou hear and answer our requests, for the sake of Christ Jesus. Amen.

The portion of Scripture to be read—

HEBREWS XIII.

PARAPHRASE II. 2-5.

SERMON.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we desire to glorify thy name. Thou hast done more for us than we have known how to ask or

think. We cannot praise thee as we ought. Thou art mighty in strength and wisdom. Unrestricted and boundless in thy love. Thou art the bountiful Giver of the good that our souls desire, and the merciful withholder of the evil that our sins deserve. Great is thy faithfulness, and thy mercy never faileth.

We bless thee, O our God, for the great salvation which thou hast provided for us in Jesus Christ. We gratefully receive it as all our salvation, and all our desire. We rejoice in the power and grace of the Saviour, and in his suitableness to our condition. Oh! magnify thy power and thy grace in our deliverance. Let it be thy good pleasure, O God, to deliver us from every weight of sin, and from every yoke of bondage, that our souls may be fitted to serve thee with that sincerity, and readiness, and gladness which thou requirest of thy people.

Mercifully accept of our humble thanks for all the blessings which thou hast bestowed upon us. We praise thee for that thou hast vouchsafed to call us to the knowledge of thy grace and faith in thee, and for continuing to bless us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. Increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore, and grant that we may improve our manifold advantages to the good of our souls, and to the glory of thy name.

It is of thy goodness, O Lord, that thy people in this parish have been permitted this day to engage in the services of the sanctuary, to listen to the instructions of thy Word, and to partake of the memorials of Christ's broken body and shed blood. May they feel the obligations under which they are anew brought to redeeming mercy. May they remember that they have consecrated themselves anew to thee. O Lord, give them grace to

walk in accordance with their sacramental engagements. May they walk in thy ways, observe thine ordinances, and keep thy precepts. Pardon, O God, we beseech thee, the sin of their holy things! Forgive their wandering thoughts, forgive their worldly desires and their worldly anxieties, forgive their deadness to spiritual things, forgive the coldness of their affections, forgive the weakness of their faith. Make them more obedient to thy Word, more conformed to thy image, and more devoted to thy glory.

We entreat thy blessing, O Lord, upon the instructions which have now been delivered from thy holy Word. May they be impressed upon our hearts, and manifested in our lives.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless and prosper the interests of pure and undefiled religion in our native land. May both the avowed and secret enemies of our Church be put to silence, and their machinations defeated. Let there be nothing, we pray thee, to hurt or to destroy in all thy holy mountain. We pray, likewise, that the privileges which we enjoy may be extended to the whole human race! May the happy period soon arrive, when incense and a pure offering shall be presented unto thee from the rising to the setting of the sun, when all nations shall be blessed of thee, and call thee blessed. Give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

We pray, O Lord, for the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, for all her colonies and dependencies. May a just sense of the invaluable privileges which they enjoy make the subjects of those dominions contented with their condition, loyal to their sovereign, and united to defend their common rights.

We pray for thy servant our sovereign the Queen.

May she long live to sway the sceptre over a free, a loyal, a holy, and a happy people. May her throne be surrounded by the wisest and the best of our land, and may all the measures which they adopt be rendered subservient to the public good. We pray also for the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the members of the Royal Family. May they be true members of the household of faith, and heirs of thy heavenly kingdom. We pray for our nobles, our senators, our judges, our magistrates. May they all live in thy fear, and experience thy favour. Bless all the ministers of thy holy Word and sacraments. Make them burning and shining lights, faithful to Christ and to the souls of men.

Dwell in this corner of thy vineyard. May true and undefiled religion flourish and abound more and more in it. Bless abundantly this parish and congregation. Give them, we beseech thee, an increase of faith, hope, and love. May their faith be strong in Christ, to the honour of thy name and the salvation of their souls. May their hope be sure and steadfast, entering into that within the veil. May their love, as a holy flame, purify their hearts, and shine forth in their lives.

Bless the young ; enrich their minds with useful knowledge, and adorn their hearts with gracious dispositions. Guard them from the snares of a world that lieth in wickedness, and train them up for thine everlasting kingdom.

Command thy blessing, O Lord, to rest abundantly on the labours of thy servant, the minister of this parish. Prosper him in his work of faith and labour of love ; and grant that many may appear as his hope, and joy, and crown of rejoicing, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.

Encourage the desponding and feeble-minded, comfort the sorrowful, heal the sick, give peace to the troubled in spirit, direct all in difficulties, sanctify all who are in affliction, and prepare the dying for death, judgment, and eternity. Keep us mindful, O Lord, that the end of all things is at hand, that we may be sober and watch unto prayer. Stir us up to work while it is called to-day, as those who know that the night of death cometh when we can work no longer.

Enable us to sing to thy praise ; dismiss us with thy blessing ; conduct us in safety to our places of abode. Enable us to spend the remainder of this day, and all the days of our lives, in thy fear and service. And all that we ask is in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

PARAPHRASE LXI. 1-4.

BLESSING.

Now, may grace, and mercy, and peace from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you, and with all the people of God, from henceforth, even for evermore. Amen.

THANKSGIVING-DAY.

PSALM CVL. 1-6.

PRAYER.

O most merciful and gracious God, whose eyes are over the righteous, and whose ears are open unto their prayers, we thank thee for this opportunity of drawing near to thy throne of grace. Dispose us to call in mind all that we owe to thy goodness. Great have been thy forbearance and loving-kindness to us, and infinite thy love in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We, O Lord, are sensible that nothing that we can do can at all affect thee, so as either to add to thy happiness or to impair thy peace. Thou art altogether perfect, and therefore thou art necessarily altogether happy. Yet as thou hast formed us capable of praising thee, and hast made known unto us the manner of service that is most acceptable unto thee, do thou enable us by thy grace to discharge aright the duties which are incumbent upon us.

Even by nature, O Lord, we are taught, and by the common practice of the world, we are accustomed to express our gratitude to those from whom we receive any

favour, and shall we be backward in acknowledging our obligations unto thee who art the Giver of everything that is good? Surely, O Lord, the end for which we, as well as all thy other creatures, were formed, was that we might give glory unto thy name. As thou hast, therefore, given us powers and faculties for celebrating thy praise superior to those of all thy other creatures here below, may we, according to the superiority of our natures, be more constantly and more devoutly engaged in thy worship, and in thy service.


We fear, O Lord, that we presume too much on thy goodness and forbearance. Counting on the continuance of them, we have been ungrateful, disobedient, and rebellious. Wert thou to withdraw thy goodness from us when we withheld our gratitude from thee, then should we be constrained to be more dutiful and more thankful. But we rejoice, O Lord, that thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor thy ways as ours; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are thy thoughts and thy ways higher than ours; and in the midst of deserved wrath thou hast remembered undeserved mercy. Let us not, however, O Lord, deceive ourselves by supposing, because sentence is not executed speedily upon us for our transgressions, that thou art not a strict observer of our conduct, or that thou wilt allow the wicked to pass unpunished. But may we remember that thou hast appointed a day in which thou wilt judge the world in righteousness, and wilt render unto every one according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil,—to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon

every soul of man that doeth evil. Let us, therefore, O Lord, never sin because grace abounds, but may we be as dutiful and as thankful as though we were to receive nothing but what was the reward of our own services.

We, O Lord, think but little of our own dependence upon thee ; we seldom consider how thou couldst afflict us, and how soon thou couldst deprive us of all the blessings and of all the comforts of life. How easily couldst thou, by laying thy chastening hand either upon ourselves or those who are dear to us, render the present world, instead of a scene of enjoyment, only a vale of tears. Thou couldst, in innumerable ways unknown to us, destroy all our peace. Oh that we could estimate thy goodness aright, that we could celebrate thy praise as we ought, and that we were always disposed to do it as we could !

We, O Lord, with shame, must acknowledge that we are often more anxious to be conformed to the ways of the world, and to follow the customs of wicked men, than to obey the commandments of God, and to imitate the example of our blessed Redeemer. Have we not been silent when we have heard the wicked scoffing at religion, or impiously blaspheming thy name, even when our reproof might have been of service ? Nay, have we not sometimes, in order to render ourselves agreeable to the world, neglected to perform those duties which our consciences have called upon us to discharge unto thee our God ? Although we have enlisted ourselves in thy service, and called ourselves by thy name, we have not proved ourselves to be good soldiers of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray, O Lord, that henceforward we may neither so value the smiles, nor fear the frowns of the world, as to be in the smallest degree influenced by them in regard



to our spiritual concerns ; but may we esteem the approbation of Heaven, and the testimony of a good conscience, the most desirable, as they are the most substantial, and the most satisfactory of all enjoyments. May we not serve thee only at stated times, and for particular purposes, but may we at all times, and in all situations, endeavour to act as we ought.

We feel, however, O Lord, that it is not in man who walketh to direct his own steps. We would, therefore, commit ourselves entirely to thy disposal ; and we would rely on the aids of thy Spirit to enable us to perform our duty, and to resist every temptation to evil. We adore thee that thou hast given us so many powerful assistants in our spiritual welfare—that thou hast given us thy Word to instruct us, thy Spirit to enlighten us, and thy grace to restrain us from wandering out of the ways of thy commandments.

May we, O Lord, esteem thy word as a most precious treasure, as more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. May thy testimonies be our study, thy commandments our guide, and thy laws our delight. Let thy Spirit quicken and enliven us in the discharge of all our spiritual duties. May he shew us clearly the way of salvation through Christ, and give us grace to incline, and enable us to walk in it.

Blessed be thy name for the renewed opportunity which thy people in this place had yesterday of sitting down at a communion table, to shew forth the Lord's death, and to renew the vows which bind them to love and serve thee. We pray that thou wouldst perfect that which concerns them, even unto the day of the Lord. As they have received the Lord Jesus, so may they walk in him. Oh, enable them to give their hearts wholly to thee, and greatly delight in God their Saviour.

Now that we are assembled in thy house, and engaged in those exercises which are required in thy Word, and which have been the employment and delight of thy people in all ages of the Christian Church, may we not be mere formal worshippers, but may we worship thee in spirit and in truth, and upon all our services do thou command thy blessing. O may we who are appointed to preach thy Word have grace to be found faithful. May those who hear it receive it into grateful hearts.

Our prayers, O Lord, are now before thee ; grant us an answer in peace, and go forward with, and direct us in all things aright, this day, and for ever, for Christ's sake. Amen.

The portion of Scripture to be read—

I PETER II.

PARAPHRASE XLII.

SERMON.

PRAYER.

O Lord, we would desire to lift up our hearts with our hands unto thee, and to adore thee for all thy goodness. Thou, O Lord, keepest covenant and mercy with thy people, for such as walk before thee with all their heart. We, O Lord, have said, that we are thine, we have called ourselves by thy name. May our ways be directed to keep thy statutes, and we shall not be ashamed, when we have respect unto all thy commandments. May we never enter into the path of the wicked, nor go in the way of evil men, but may a constant remembrance of thy astonishing goodness towards us ever deter us from the commission of evil.

Thou, O Lord, hast formed us for thyself, that we may shew forth thy praise. Thou hast visited and redeemed us by raising up for us an Horn of Salvation in the house of thy servant David. And in this has thy love been wonderfully manifested, in that while we were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for us.

May we, O Lord, be truly thankful unto thee for this thy greatest and best gift. O may we be pardoned, accepted, and saved, for the Redeemer's sake.

May we be enabled by thy grace to live as it becomes thy redeemed people. May we abhor sin in all its forms. May we cultivate every amiable virtue. Whatsoever things are pure, just, lovely, honest, and of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, may we, O Lord, think upon these things. May we find more pleasure in the discharge of our duty, and may we feel a less propensity to that which is evil. May we never allow any temptation, however strong, to entice us from the path of our duty, but may we be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that in due time we shall reap if we faint not. May we duly consider the promises of the Gospel. May we reflect on the high rewards which are promised to those who shall be found faithful. May we also meditate on the threatenings which are denounced against those who forget God, who disregard the institutions of his appointment, who follow the imaginations of their own hearts. May we remember that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for us, if we neglect that salvation which Christ has wrought for us. May we endeavour to lead the life of the righteous, and our last end shall be like his.

Follow with thy blessing, O Lord, the preaching of thy

Word, and all the services of thy house. Water the seed sown, may it spring up to everlasting life.

O Lord, let thy kingdom spread on the earth, scatter the darkness which prevents men from seeing its glory, weaken the powers which oppose its progress, and succeed the lawful endeavours of all those who labour for its extension. Let the weapons of their warfare be found mighty to the pulling down every stronghold of error, and to the setting up that kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Bless all who are called to preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God, may they deliver thy Word with clearness and force, and may the Holy Spirit so accompany their ministry, that many may be brought to know thee, the only true God, and to live in the faith and love of the Redeemer to the end of their days.

Bless the Church which thou hast planted in our land. May she be the honoured instrument in thy hand for maintaining and promoting a spirit of true and undefiled religion amongst us. Be thou, Lord, for walls and bulwarks around our Zion.

Be very gracious, O God, to our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria ; protect her person, prolong her days, guide her councils, let her reign be prosperous, and crown with thy blessing all her endeavours for the public good. Bless the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and all the branches of the Royal Family. Bestow upon them such gifts of thy good Spirit as may fit them for all the duties of their exalted station. Bless thou and counsel all those who exercise lawful authority over us. May our rulers rule in the fear of the Lord. Bless abundantly the whole body of the people. Dwell in this city. Bless it in all its interests. May thy servants in the magistracy not hold the sword of justice in vain. While they are a terror to

evil-doers, may they be the praise and reward of those who do well.

Bless especially this parish and congregation. Enrich their souls with all spiritual and heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. May all who have enjoyed the privilege of gospel ordinances in this place carry about with them the remembrance of the truths that have been borne in upon their minds, and so live that the world may take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus. May the light which has shone upon them, abide with them, and guide them in the paths of peace. May they give thanks unto thee for every holy thought and desire, every godly affection and resolution which thou hast been pleased to stir up in them, and for every good impression still remaining upon their spirits. We give thee thanks, gracious God, for those pledges of thy love in Christ Jesus which thy people in this place have yesterday received at thy table. Do thou fill their hearts with a just sense of the benefits which thou hast bestowed upon them. Help them to keep their vows, to conduct themselves in accordance with their obligations. May thy blessing, in a particular manner, rest upon the young, to keep them from drawing back and growing weary in their Redeemer's work; and on the old, that as their day is, so their strength and faith in thee may be, to cheer and support them, as they daily draw nearer to their latter end.

We pray that all who have neglected to avail themselves of this opportunity of honouring Christ, and have had no sense of its sacredness and importance, may be convinced of their guilt, and brought to repentance, and henceforth seek and serve him with their whole heart, in this and other appointments. O may the number of true and acceptable communicants, here and elsewhere, be daily increasing.

Bless thy servant whom thou hast appointed to dispense unto this people the bread of life. Enrich his own soul with thy grace. Strengthen him for his work. May he be blessed and be made a blessing to them. May he ardently pursue the great and good work of instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the vicious ; and by the excellence of his doctrine, and the holiness of his life, may he save himself and those who hear him.

We pray, O Lord, for those on whom thou hast laid thy chastening hand. May every affliction be sanctified to the afflicted, and be the means of leading them to draw refreshment and consolation from the wells of salvation. Prepare the dying for their last and great change. Comfort those who mourn the loss of departed relatives. Prepare all of us for that great change which will bring us down to the grave, the house appointed for all living. And since the time of our departure is so very uncertain, teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the abundant supply of food with which thou hast stored our land. We pray that thou wouldst send such weather as thou knowest to be necessary for preparing the earth to receive the precious seed, that there may still be plenty of provisions for man and for beast. On thy goodness all our trust depends. Assist us in singing thy praises. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Carry us in safety to our respective dwellings. Enable us to live to thy praise, to die in thy peace, to rise in glory, and ever be with the Lord, through Jesus Christ, to whom with Thee, and the Holy Spirit, one God, be glory evermore. Amen.

BLESSING.

May grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you and with all the people of God, now, henceforth, and for evermore. Amen.

LICENSING OF PROBATIONERS FOR THE MINISTRY.

At _____, the _____ day of _____, one thousand eight hundred and _____. The which day the Presbytery of _____ having taken into consideration that A—— B——, student of divinity, had passed the usual course of literature and philosophy at the University of _____, and thereafter studied divinity for a competent time, as required by the General Assembly of this Church, in the case of those who are candidates for the holy ministry; that he had produced satisfactory testimonials from the professors of divinity with whom he studied, giving an account of his proficiency, of his having delivered all the discourses prescribed according to the acts of Assembly, and of his character and conduct during his attendance having been suitable to his views; that they, or a committee of their number, had privately taken trial of his knowledge in divinity and other necessary branches of study, and found him qualified (or reported him as qualified) to be entered upon public probationary trials in order to his being licensed to preach the gospel; that the neighbouring presbyteries, as also the Synod of the bounds, having

been duly acquainted with the design of admitting him to trials, their concurrence had been obtained ; and that, in consequence of these preliminary steps, the said A—— B—— had accordingly been admitted by the Presbytery to the several trials appointed by acts of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland,—all the parts of which probationary trials he had now finished,—did, on a review of his whole appearances, declare their satisfaction with the specimens which he had given of his literature and other qualifications requisite for becoming a licentiate of this Church, and agree that he should accordingly be licensed to preach the gospel. Whereupon the questions appointed by the 10th Act of Assembly, 1711, to be put to such as are to be licensed, were put to him by the Moderator, viz.—

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners ?

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith approved by the General Assembly of the National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, and frequently confirmed by divers acts of Parliament since that time, to be the truths of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament ; and do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith ?

3. Do you sincerely own the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in this Church, and asserted in Act 15th, General Assembly, 1707, entitled, “Act against Innovation in the Worship of God ;” and do you also own the Presbyterian government and discipline now so happily established in this Church ; and are you persuaded that the said doctrine, worship, and disci-

pline, and church government, are founded upon the Holy Scriptures, and agreeable thereto ?

4. Do you promise that, through the grace of God, you will firmly and constantly adhere to, and, in your station, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain, and defend the said doctrine, worship, and discipline, and the government of this Church by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and General Assemblies ?

5. Do you promise that, in your practice, you will conform yourself to the said worship, and submit yourself to the said discipline and government of this Church ? and you shall never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same ?

6. Do you promise that you shall follow no divisive course from the present establishment in this Church ?

7. Do you renounce all doctrines, tenets, or opinions whatsoever, contrary to or inconsistent with the said doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church ?

8. Do you promise that you will subject yourself to the several judicatories of this Church, and are you willing to subscribe to these things ?

Having given satisfactory answers to these questions, the student subscribes the formula in which the substance of the questions is embodied. The "Act against Simony," Act 8th, Assembly 1759, is then read to him in presence of the Presbytery by the clerk ; the Moderator is appointed to license him to preach the gospel ; and the clerk is ordered to furnish him with an extract of his licence.

The formula must be subscribed before licence is obtained, and presbyteries are not allowed to use any other formula but that which is prescribed by Act 10th, Assembly 1711.

In some presbyteries, before licensing the student, they require their Moderator to engage in prayer to the great King and Head of the Church that he would be graciously pleased by his grace and Spirit to fit and qualify him for the important work in which he is about to engage.

Such a mode of procedure ought to be adopted by all presbyteries. Agreeably thereto, prayer is offered up by the Moderator in some such form as the following :—

Let us pray—

Holy Lord God, we desire to place our trust in thee, and to pour out our hearts before thee. Thou art highly exalted in thy glory and in thy majesty. Deeply impress our minds with a sense of thine exceeding greatness and glory. May a sense of our insignificance and dependence fill us with gratitude for the undeserved favour thou bestowest on us, and the care thou takest of us.

We, O Lord, have grievously sinned against thee, and are not worthy to be called thy children ; and we have no plea that we can urge but Christ Jesus the Son of thy love, whom thou hast assured us to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, and that whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. We know that thou wilt not cast us off when we come unto thee through him, but wilt hear, forgive, and receive us.

But, O Lord, though we believe, we feel that our faith is weak ; help our unbelief, increase our faith ; give us more realising convictions of thy truths and promises, and a clearer and more spiritual discernment of what thou wouldst have us to do. Let us not be ignorant of the righteousness which thou hast revealed ; going about

to establish a righteousness of our own, which we can never accomplish.

Oh let not our souls be cold in thy work, but let our hearts burn within us. May we feel our obligations to redeeming love ; and oh do thou, who hast displayed thy love towards us by the gift of thy Son, consummate and crown this thy great mercy by sending thy Spirit into our hearts. May he be vouchsafed unto us in all his sanctifying and saving influences. May he implant within us every holy and heavenly principle.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst bless, encourage, and support him whom we are now in thy name to set apart to preach the glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners ; endue him with power from on high. May he be enriched with thy grace, and qualified by thy Spirit for his important work. Establish his heart unblameable in holiness. May he influence all around him by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by love unfeigned. To spend and to be spent in thy service should be his reason of living, and the delight of his life. Raise his mind to this standard ; endue him with this desire. May he live unto the Lord. May he study thy Word with earnest and prayerful attention. May he who inspired it,—the Spirit of truth,—direct his studies into it, and his conclusions from it. Sanctify him through thy truth ; thy Word is truth. Ever may he lift up his soul to thee in every trial of temper, and every contest of principle. Wherever he is, whatever he do, may his heart be always thine.

May we all be fully alive to our spiritual and eternal interests, and be deeply anxious to fulfil the duties of our important office with a view to thy glory and the good of souls.

Hear these our prayers, which we offer up in and

through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great King and Head of the Church, and by authority of this Presbytery, I do now license you to preach the gospel of Christ, and exercise your gifts as a probationer for the holy ministry.

The Moderator and the members of Presbytery present here give the person licensed the right hand of fellowship.

The Moderator then proceeds to deliver to him a suitable exhortation, bearing on the duties of the pastoral office, in some such form as the following :—

You have been admitted to a highly honourable and at the same time a most important office. Gifts are necessary to capacitate you for it, and grace to animate you faithfully to discharge its duties. Every one who is appointed to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ ought to be able to say, "I have received my commission from Heaven ; my call is of God."

There are many, however, who enter on the sacred office without ever inquiring whether it be the will of God to employ them in the work of the ministry. Hence it is that we have now the mournful example of many flocks among whom grievous wolves fill the shepherd's office, to the subversion and ruin of many souls. I trust you are actuated by a very different spirit, and have nobler and purer motives for becoming a preacher of the gospel of Christ.

Rightly to divide the Word of truth should be the unceasing object of one who is appointed to preach the gospel, if he would be "approved of God, and be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed ;" and it is a skill

worth studying for and labouring to attain; your success and the good of souls depend upon it more than is commonly imagined. It is said of Paul and Barnabas, when labouring in Iconium in a synagogue of the Jews, that they so spake that a great multitude, both of the Jews and also of the Greeks, believed. They preached powerfully and successfully. Their style as preachers, as well as their spirit, had much to do with the result. The same remark holds good with respect to all preachers. Much, everywhere and at all times, depends upon the man, intellectually as well as spiritually. This sentiment is sustained, not only by what we read in the Word of God, but also by what we see in his providence, in his actual withholding or dispensing success. You discover that certain men have been distinguished for success. You are prepared to say that it was not altogether because they possessed more piety, or exhibited more truth than some others who have been less successful. It was, in part, because they were more skilful in presenting the truth. They drew attention to it; they produced conviction by it. The Spirit brought many home to God.

Let it here be distinctly and strongly averred, that no fitness or skill in the presentation will avail to a saving result, unless the Holy Ghost accompanies and gives efficiency to the Word. You may preach with the eloquence of an angel, and, without the Spirit, not a conversion would be effected. While I say this with the utmost strength and sincerity, I repeat the sentiment, that very much depends, in the securing of success, upon the preacher's skill. Indeed, facts on every hand admonish you to study the art of preaching with the utmost intentness. Skill in this work seems to be almost as important as if skill were the efficient power. While you seek out and

set in order acceptable words,—and the message of Heaven deserves the best accompaniments that earth can yield,—these must be considered only as a tribute to its excellence, and as a means of exciting attention to it, and in no way as contributing to its saving energy ; it is gospel truth in its simplest statements, and in the language of Scripture, that is generally employed in awakening or changing the heart. The arrows which pierce the heart are taken from this quiver, and this is the still small voice in which God is.

It is no less indispensable, in order to be successful, that you be a clear and sound theologian. Of this, I presume, you are convinced, and will act, I trust, agreeably to that conviction ; for suitable means must be used, not only for the good of others, but with a view to the improvement of your own mind in an acquaintance with divine truth. It is necessary that you should have a clear view of the truth, and that an inspiring confidence in its efficacy must be awakened and sustained. You must utter your message in freeness and fervour, with the belief that there is an importance, a dignity, a worth attached to it which the most reckless must respect, and a power inherent which the most obdurate must feel.

I speak of truth, then, not merely as lodged in the head, but lodged and living in the heart. To be a successful preacher, you must have not simply clear theoretic knowledge ; you must have especially a deep experimental knowledge of the grand system of doctrine, of the scheme of salvation wrought out by Christ. It must have all been authenticated in the conflicts and triumphs of your own breast. You speak what you do know ; you testify what you have seen and felt. You must

so speak, if you would speak with effect. If you do so speak, it will be with effect, even though in other respects your talents and acquisitions be of a secondary order.

The sermons of the powerful and faithful preacher are taken especially out of the heart, as all good sermons must be. Truth may be taken from the head, but it must be carried through the heart before it is imbued with the Spirit and with power. Your purpose before ignorant men must be to instruct them in the doctrine of the cross ; before careless men, to awaken them to a sense of their guilt ; before sceptical men, to convince them of their unbelief ; before the obdurate, to melt them down into repentance ; in short, to urge, if possible, every unsheltered soul to the refuge by God provided.

But in preaching you may have an object, and err in the way of reaching it. You may be pointed in your intention, select in your matter, but if you be not also actually pointed, urgent, significantly close in your appeal, you will assuredly fail of doing the good you ought to do. The manner also is to be cultivated—the voice, attitude, action, expression. There is great power in these. It is indispensable that there be in the candidate for the ministry a zealous study of these things, if he would arrest attention to, and make effective on the heart, the matter he prepares. But valuable as these outward accomplishments are, the internal are far more so. Especially must the heart be cultivated ; and let the teacher there be the purifying, enkindling, elevating Spirit of God. Out of a warm, illumined heart comes the best eloquence, the most arresting and subduing the world ever hears.

As you should take heed to yourself respecting the principles on which you act, and the ends at which you aim in your preparation for the pulpit, so it behoves you to be still more careful in these respects when you enter on public service. In all your studies, and in all your labours, watch against a spirit of self-sufficiency. Remember that your ability for every spiritual duty, and all your success, must be from God. To him your eye must be directed, and on his promised aid your expectations of usefulness must be formed. In thus acting the part of a Christian, while you perform the work of an instructor for the benefit of others, your own soul will feel itself interested in the doctrines you preach, and in the duties you inculcate, in the promises you exhibit, and in the reproofs you administer. In short, your whole disposition and conduct ought to evince that you are a disciple of him who "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."

Prayer, as a means to the attainment in question, should be very prominent. It gives clearness to the understanding, and strength and pureness to emotion; it quickens thought, and vivifies the gathered and otherwise dead material. You should seek above all things to be eminently a man of prayer, and grace will be poured into your lips, and you will have the eloquence of the truth and the love and the Spirit of God. Pray for yourself, pray for all, and pray with faith and expectation; for in the immutable Word, that word which must survive both heaven and earth, it stands recorded, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you." The Lord cares for all his believing people, but for none so much as those who work for his cause, and try to do good.

None were ever so faithful as He. But none were ever so truly wise. You should make him your pattern, and walk in his steps.

And now, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified. Amen.

ORDINATION AND INDUCTION OF A MINISTER.


PSALM LXXXIX. 15-19.

PRAYER.

O LORD, thou art the only living and true God, the self-existent, independent, and eternal Jehovah. All things derive their existence from thee, all are naked and open to thy view ; and all are subject to thy control, and subservient to thy glory.

Enable us, we humbly beseech thee, to approach thy throne at this time with true hearts, and in the full assurance of faith, deeply affected by a sense of our own unworthiness, but relying with confidence on the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, who is the way, and the truth, and the life, and through whom thou hast promised to receive us graciously, and love us freely.

With what unfeigned gratitude ought our hearts to be filled unto thee, that we are permitted to approach into thy house of prayer ! With what fervent devotion ought our services to be offered up at the footstool of thy throne ! With what humility and contrition ought our sins to be acknowledged ! With what firmness of resolution, and



with what fulness of grace ought we to be fortified, that we may really and in earnest declare before thee that we are determined to forsake our sins !

We pray, O Lord, that we may be led to reflect more seriously on the nature of that dedication which we make of ourselves unto thee, when we thus approach into thy immediate presence, and when we lift up our voices at the footstool of thy throne, acknowledging thy goodness, professing obedience to thy commandments, imploring pardon for our offences, and praying for grace to enable us to discharge our duty.

Thou hast in the Scriptures of truth made known unto us what duties we ought to perform, what doctrines we ought to believe, and what affections we ought to subdue.

When we, O Lord, reflect on the high privileges which we enjoy, and when we consider what thou hast done for our redemption, we are sensible that we can never requite thy goodness. We are convinced that the most unfeigned gratitude and love are ever due unto thee our great Creator and merciful Deliverer. But, alas ! we are careless and remiss in the discharge of our duty. The snares, the temptations, and the allurements of the world draw off our attention from our first and most important interests. We often prefer present and temporary pleasures to future and eternal happiness.

We adore thee, O Lord, that our ingratitude unto thee for thy blessings has never provoked thee to withhold thy goodness from us, but that thou art still waiting to be gracious, still lengthening out the day of our salvation, still calling and inviting us to come unto thee that we may have everlasting life. We thank thee that Jesus Christ not only died for our sins, but that he rose again for our justification ; and that as in Adam all die, so through faith in Christ we shall be made alive. We are

convinced that there is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved but by the name of Jesus Christ. May we, therefore, be enabled to receive him in all his offices—as our Prophet, to instruct us in our duty and in the way of life; as our Priest, to atone for our sins, and to intercede for us at thy right hand; as our King, to rule in us and over us, and to defend us from all our spiritual foes.

May we, O Lord, be convinced that without an interest in the merits and purchase of Christ, we can have no solid peace in this world, nor any comfortable prospect as to that which is to come. In order to the obtaining this interest in him, we pray that we may have that faith which will enable us to give the most implicit trust to all the declarations of thy Word concerning him, which will enable us to rest and rely on him alone for salvation, as he is set forth to us in the Gospel; for in thy Word we are expressly told that even this faith is the gift of God, and that by faith we are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

Believing in Christ, we pray, O Lord, that our hearts may be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and that this Spirit may bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God, and, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

And being thus predestinated unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, may we bring forth the fruits of righteousness to the praise and the glory of thy grace.

We, O Lord, would lift up our hearts and our voices at the footstool of thy throne, and we would implore the fulfilment of all the gracious declarations thou hast made, and the precious promises thou hast given concerning thy Church.

With holy reverence, O Lord, we would desire to remind thee that thou hast said that thou hast chosen Zion—that thou hast desired it for thy habitation—that this is thy rest for ever—that here wilt thou dwell, for thou hast desired it. We would remind thee that thou hast promised that thou wilt abundantly bless her provision—that thou wilt satisfy her poor with bread—that thou wilt clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy.

And as we, O Lord, are now met for the purpose of setting apart thy servant to the work of the ministry, that he may declare thy message of salvation to this people, we pray that thy Spirit may be upon him, that he may delight in thy work, and be blessed in his ministrations, and in his flock.

And grant, we beseech thee, that this people may receive instruction with a teachable spirit. As new-born babes, may they desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.

We pray thee, O Lord, to be present with us, and assist us in all the services of this day. May we speak because we believe, and may we hear to the saving of our souls. And let our prayers and praises be spiritual sacrifices, acceptable in thy sight, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERMON.

PSALM CXV. 10-15.

The minister intimates that A—— B—— (the person who is to be ordained) having received a presentation from C—— D——, the legal patron to the vacant parish of ——; and the Presbytery having made trial of his

qualifications for the ministry, and being satisfied therewith, his call having been moderated, the edict for ordination having been served, and returned duly executed and indorsed, warning all persons having any objections against his being admitted minister of said parish, to lodge the same with the Presbytery, that they may be judged and cognosced ; proclamation to the same effect having also been this day made, at the most patent door of the church, and no objections offered, (or objections having been offered and disposed of, as the case may be,) the Presbytery are now to proceed to his ordination as minister of this parish, by prayer and the imposition of hands. But in order that they (the people) might be satisfied of his soundness in the Christian faith, he (the officiating clergyman) would now put to him the questions appointed by the Act of Assembly to be put to ministers at their ordination. The presentee is then called upon to give satisfactory answers to the following questions :—

Stand up.

1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners ?

2. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approved by the General Assemblies of this Church, and ratified by law in the year 1690, to be founded upon the Word of God ; and do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith : and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and to the utmost of your power assert, maintain, and defend the same, and the purity of worship as presently practised in this National Church, and asserted in Act

XV., Assembly 1707, entitled, Act against Innovations in the Worship of God?

3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Bourignian, and other doctrines, tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to, or inconsistent with, the foresaid Confession of Faith?

4. Are you persuaded that the Presbyterian government and discipline of this Church are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto; and do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline, and to concur with the same, and never to endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof, but to the utmost of your power, in your station, to maintain, support, and defend the said discipline and Presbyterian government by Kirk-Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies, during all the days of your life?

5. Do you promise to submit yourself willingly and humbly, in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of this Presbytery, and to be subject to them, and all other Presbyteries, and superior judicatories of this Church, where God in his providence shall cast your lot; and that, according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this Church against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatever trouble or persecution may arise, and that you shall follow no divisive courses from the present established doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this Church?

6. Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interest?

7. Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call?

8. Do you engage, in the strength and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord and Master, to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ ?

9. Do you accept of and close with the call to be pastor of this parish, and promise through grace to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the gospel among this people ?

Having obtained from the presentee, by his answers to these questions, the requisite declarations, promises, and engagements, the presiding minister then descends from the pulpit to the place where the presentee and the members of Presbytery, and such other ordained ministers as may be present, are seated. And the person to be ordained alone kneeling, and the whole congregation standing, he pronounces the ordination prayer. When the officiating minister comes to implore the Divine blessing on the person now to be set apart to the office of the ministry, he, along with all the ordained ministers present, puts his hand upon the head of the person, who still continues kneeling.

ORDINATION PRAYER.

O God, in thee are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Thou art blessed in thyself, and thou art the gracious author of all our blessings. Thou alone hast everlasting life, and thou only canst bestow it on others. Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from thee, the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

Thou, O Lord, has endued us with reason, thou hast

formed us for immortality, thou hast revealed to us thy will, thou hast made known unto us our duty, thou givest us all things richly to enjoy.

Do thou, O Lord, enable us to see the way of life through Christ, and do thou dispose us to come unto thee through him. Let us not distrust thy willingness to pardon. But may we come into thy presence pleading the merits of our Redeemer, and his perfect righteousness as an atonement for all our sins, and may we plead the same merits and confide in the same strength to enable us to sanctify ourselves wholly unto thy service.

We would offer unto thee, O Lord, the gratitude of our hearts, that to assist us in the discharge of those duties which we owe unto thee, thou hast promised us the aids of thy Spirit. We would humbly pray for the fulfilment of this promise. Let thy Spirit, O Lord, help our infirmities, and fit us for thy service.

Oh, may we be convinced, as thou in thy Word hast declared it, that it is to thy free and sovereign grace alone that we are indebted for that scheme of mercy and reconciliation which has been made known to us through Jesus Christ, and which he has accomplished at the inestimable price of his own most precious blood.

Oh, give us that true faith in thy grace and in our Saviour's merits, without which the salvation of the gospel can never be ours.

We bless thee, O Lord, that Jesus Christ, when he did tabernacle in this world, which he came to redeem with his own blood, did ordain chosen disciples to go and preach the gospel of a free salvation to every creature, and that by these means we, who are an island of the Gentiles, have long been blessed with the knowledge of a Saviour.

We bless thee for the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost which were bestowed upon the prophets and apostles

in the first ages of the Church, by which they were enabled to overcome the powerful enemies they had to contend with. We bless thee for the ordinary communications of thy Spirit which thou art still vouchsafing to pastors and teachers, into whose hands the commission originally given to the apostles is now entrusted. We bless thee that by means of the preaching of the gospel a Church has been established and maintained upon earth, against which, thou hast promised, the gates of hell shall not prevail.

And we pray, O most merciful God, that thou wouldst pour forth abundantly the gifts and graces of thy Spirit upon thy servant, [here the officiating minister and the other members of Presbytery place their hands upon the head of the presentee, who is kneeling before them,] whom, in thy name, and by thine authority, we do now solemnly ordain and set apart to the work of the ministry. Do thou endue him with the spirit of his office. Fill his heart with the love of Christ, and with devotedness to his sacred work, that he may be successful, with thy blessing, in turning immortal spirits for heaven. Enlighten his mind with thy Spirit, that he may preach the gospel faithfully and zealously, that he may preach it with all his soul, preach it in all its awfulness, sweetness, and power. And may he, by fulfilling the office of the ministry in all things, both save himself and those who are committed to his care. May thy blessing rest abundantly upon this parish. May the sacred connexion which we have this day constituted between them and their minister be richly blessed for their spiritual nourishment, for their growth in grace, for their increase in holiness.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst impress all of us who are engaged in the work of the ministry more deeply with a sense of the awful responsibility that attaches to

us—that thou wouldst dispose us to study thy Word with the most serious attention—to receive the law from thy mouth, and to give warning unto all as from thee—declaring to the wicked that they shall surely die, and to the righteous that they depart not from their righteousness to commit iniquity.

O Lord, we pray that when wise, and able, and faithful men have once been sent to labour in thy vineyard, that thou wouldst incline the hearts of all thy people to receive instruction, to wait upon the ministrations of thy servants with earnest attention, with diligence, preparation, and prayer ; that they may receive the truth in the love of it ; that they may lay up thy Word in their hearts, and practise it in their lives.

Revive thy work among all the churches of Christ. While we intercede for others, visit us with thy salvation. Continue thy loving-kindness unto them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

Hear and accept of us for the merits of our Redeemer, who is God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

The officiating minister then addresses the minister now ordained as follows :—“In name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great King and Head of the Church, and by authority of this Presbytery, I now receive and admit you to the pastoral charge of this parish, and to all the rights and privileges belonging thereto, as such, and give you the right hand of fellowship ;”—in which he is followed by all the members present. He then returns to the pulpit, and earnestly and affectionately exhorts, first, the newly-ordained minister to watch over the flock committed to his care ; and, secondly, the people to be respectful to their pastor, and careful to profit by his ministrations.

CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

Reverend and dearly-beloved Brother,—**H**aving been called, as we believe, “by the grace that is given to you of God to be a minister of Jesus Christ,” you have now, by “prayer and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery,” been separated and solemnly set apart for discharging the functions of that sacred office. The office of a spiritual instructor is attended with great difficulty and responsibility, and the duties of it are hard to be discharged. You undertake a most difficult and responsible office, and they who have well considered its duties and its difficulties tremble to undertake it. It would be vain and presumptuous to engage in such a laborious and arduous work without delight in it, fitness for it, or regard to its great end and design. No one can form a true estimate of the nature, design, and difficulties of the ministerial office, who leaves out of view the desperate wickedness of the human heart. The gospel presupposes a charge of guilt against every individual of the human family, and their consequent liability to eternal perdition. It is the duty, then, of the minister of the gospel to proclaim the treaty of man’s peace with God, to explain its terms, to urge its acceptance, and to bring the sinner into friendship with his offended Lawgiver. This is his business.

A Christian minister should be thoroughly prepared for his duties, and should neglect no branch of knowledge fitted to give power to his reasonings, or to supply him with arguments. The minister who would be a workman needing not to be ashamed, and whom none can with any show of reason despise, must not only study the book of Revelation and the book of Providence, but be a diligent reader of the book of Nature and the book of Human

Life. The Word and the ways of God he must, first of all, habitually study and observe ; but the works of God, as these are displayed by modern science, and the world of man, the world of human nature and character, he must also examine, with the diligence of one who seeks and finds in all around him, materials of intellectual wealth and spiritual usefulness. How valuable to the Christian minister is the study of human life and character, and how the different members of a flock, as they have different or peculiar characteristics, require very often a special mode of treatment !

As an indispensable requisite to do this efficiently, you must yourself be what you propose to make others. For how can a man know what a Christian should be who is not a Christian himself ? Eminent piety is a fundamental requisite to your work in the ministry. Sound in the faith the effective minister must be. For how can he aid the formation of complete Christian character while he gives but partial exhibitions of the truth ? He must be an example to his people in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity, and be able to say with an apostle, " Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ." For what will he do for good to the characters of others, if not himself a pattern of those things which he enjoins on them ? And here I would advert to the wisdom and goodness which the Saviour has displayed in giving to his Church " pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The wisdom of this measure is worthy of our highest admiration. Nothing like the Christian ministry existed in the world before. It was entirely original with the Saviour, and is one of the most prominent and striking features of Christianity.

The general plan of spreading Christianity by public

preaching, and of appointing a distinct order of men to the service of religion, is entirely Christian. Nothing had appeared in the world before analogous to it; and it is not too much to say, that public religious instruction and the duties of the Christian ministry, are as original and as remarkable peculiarities of the gospel as are its sublime and blessed truths themselves.

But to this must be added, what is perhaps still more peculiar, and certainly more deeply affecting, the duties of the ministerial office. In this office, he who expounds the Word of God, and who administers the holy solemnities of the Church, is brought into most confidential and endearing relations with the people over whom he is placed. By your ordination over this parish, you are brought into a connexion with this people in itself most interesting, and the occasion of a series of other relations in the highest degree tender and affectionate, and fitted to awaken many of the kindest and most sacred feelings. To you, as their minister, they will resort in the trials which oppress their own hearts, or afflict their families; to you they will unbosom their sorrows, and commune with you without reserve and without distrust. With all their more important changes of life you will now be intimately associated. To you they will come to resolve their conscientious doubts, and to you they will look to direct their charity. The friend and guide of every rank and age among this people, their teacher, monitor, and counsellor, you will have a hold on their respect and affections which belongs only to the pastoral office. How beautiful is this domestic relation of the Christian minister! How effective to promote the moral interests of a people, whether we consider the intelligence, peace, and virtue of the present life, or extend our views to the infinitely more important scenes of a future existence! What

an instrument of good is a sanctified and devoted minister in a parish, who, with professional earnestness and singleness of heart in the service of God, subordinates everything to the great and holy objects of his office, the conversion and salvation of men! This is the one object for which the Bible ordains its ministers; this object it holds out everywhere. For them to live is Christ. It is all full of the Spirit of Christ, of holy and heavenly love. This Spirit is the breath of a minister of Christ, the life of his life. No philosophy can be a substitute for it; no acquired endowments can supersede it; no learning can atone for its absence; and when it informs the soul of the man, it sanctifies him, it consecrates him, it makes him earnestly zealous in God's work, and to win souls unto God.

A question of surpassing interest here presents itself,—By what means may the duties of the sacred office be performed most successfully? There is but one answer,—The only sure means of eminent success in the ministry, is a spirit of entire self-devotedness to the sacred work, a heart glowing with love to Christ, and a holy zeal for the salvation of men. The work of the ministry may be said to consist in the business of instruction, of persuasion, and of administering the consolations of the Christian faith. To do this rightly, a minister will see his own weakness, and feel his need of Divine assistance. Hence he will highly estimate the importance of prayer; he will believe confidently that earnest prayer opens heaven, that it is the key that unlocks the storehouse of mercy, and he will frequently test its sustaining efficacy. Such is the preparation he will make for the duties of his office. How can he fail of an abundant blessing in their performance?

And such piety will qualify him for eminent success in his public ministrations; he will be seen to be a sincere

and devoted man. As he pleads with his people in God's behalf, the solemnities of eternity will seem to gather around him. An ambassador from God, he brings terms of pardon to the guilty. Mercy on hovering wings lingers yet over the rebellious ; but, rejected now, will she come again ? Heaven, with its joys, shall his hearers lose it ? Hell, with its dark abyss, shall their despairing souls be plunged into it for ever ? Such themes will absorb every thought, and warm his soul with affectionate earnestness, so that none can doubt but that his pleadings of love come from a heart of perfect sincerity. The sublime truths he proclaims flow from a cordial faith. All things are subordinated to the one grand purpose of advancing the kingdom of Christ. He counts nothing dear but this which will enkindle his emotions, and throw a fervour into his language which will arrest the wandering thought, claim the attention, and fasten conviction on the mind.

And as eminent piety is thus essential for success in the labours of the pulpit, it is no less so to secure success in the discharge of parochial duties. When is the minister of the gospel most beloved by his people ? When do his words of encouragement, of exhortation, of warning, exert a controlling influence over their lives ? When do they most revere him as a servant of God ? Is it not when his own life is a bright exemplification of all that he urges upon them ? Is it not when they see him acting as one who has found a fountain of purer joys than those of this earth ? Is it not when he speaks of heaven to them as one whose communications are with that better land of blessedness ? Is it not when he pictures to their minds this sin-cursed world, for the salvation of which he labours as one hastening onward to the judgment-seat of God ?

Follow such a minister as he goes to reclaim some guilty wanderer of his flock ; see in what language of Christian affection he speaks ; see what kindness appears in his manner ; see with what earnestness he entreats. The honour of his Master's cause swells his heart ; it beams in his countenance ; it speaks in the falling tear. Think you that he will succeed ? Can that guilty wanderer restrain the tear of contrition ? Will he not return to his heavenly Father ?

Go with such a minister to the cottage of poverty and distress ; attend him as he administers hope to the desponding ; stand by him as he bends over the couch of affliction, or drops the tear of sympathy at the bed of death ; and say now, for which of these scenes of solemn interest does not eminent piety furnish him the most perfect preparation ? Is he not the minister most likely to labour most successfully ? Will not his devotion to the cause of Christ, his ardent prayer, his cordial faith, be the most likely means of real success, under God ? This, dear brother, is the path for you to walk, if you would be instrumental in winning souls to Christ. Your spirit must be entirely consecrated to your sacred work. Never until a minister becomes absorbed in his vocation, until he offers himself to God in faith and holy zeal, will he know how much it is in his power to accomplish ; for not till then will every faculty and energy of his soul be perfectly employed. The more eminent your piety is, the more complete will be your success in your ministry. Never, therefore, forget the importance and the responsibility of your office. It was established for great purposes ; be diligent in accomplishing them. As inestimable benefits flow from the labours of a faithful minister, corresponding evils must spring from his neglect of duty, and a corresponding degree of guilt rest on his soul.

Give yourself, then, *wholly* to your sacred work, feeling that it is arduous enough to task all your faculties. Ponder well the charge given by Paul to a young minister, —“Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Watch thou in all things; endure afflictions; do the work of an evangelist; make full proof of thy ministry.”


A solemn vow is upon you to feed the flock of Christ. Be it yours in all things to approve yourself as a minister of Christ, in piety ardent, in morals irreproachable, in doctrine uncorrupt, in action discreet, in zeal unwearied. Let it be your glory and happiness to win souls to Christ. Let your affections be bent towards heaven, and you will hardly fail of carrying your people thither. Ever have impressed on your mind the sanctity of the ministerial character. Let the duties of your parish be your delight, and the spiritual prosperity of your people your crown and rejoicing. Converse much and seriously with them; visit them at their houses; avail yourself of the knowledge of your elders to find out for you the sick and the afflicted. Let your conversation be always kind, be patient and condescending to the youngest and poorest. Reprove with tenderness, advise with judgment, encourage with confidence. God will never fail a minister desirous of serving him. “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrines; continue in them, for, in doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and those that hear thee.”

To the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, we commend thee. The Lord preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth, even for evermore. Amen.

ADDRESS TO THE CONGREGATION.

Friends and Brethren,—You have much ground of thankfulness to God for the kindness of his providence, in not only blessing you with the continuance of the Gospel of Peace, but in again providing you with a pastor to lead you in the way of salvation. A faithful minister has claims upon the affection of his people, not only on account of his personal qualifications, but also by reason of the office with which he is invested. He is an ambassador for Christ, and exhorts his flock in Christ's name to be reconciled unto God. It is your duty, therefore, that you make it your earnest aim, in a dependence on Divine grace, to profit by the labours of your pastor in the increase of faith and obedience. Regard him as speaking to you on the most momentous of all themes, and laying aside all malice and hypocrisy, and evil speaking, receive with meekness the engrafted Word, which is able to save your souls.

Your duty to your Great Head and Master, Jesus Christ, requires that you be regular attenders upon the preaching of the Word, that you receive your minister as appointed over you in his name, and that you duly revere the ordinances and firmly uphold the institutions of his holy religion. Ministers have no power but what they derive from him. Ordinances have no efficacy but what he imparts to them, and institutions are of no value but as they serve to promote and advance his glory. It is he who imparts the words of life—it is he who sheds down the Spirit of all grace—it is he who infuses that “virtue which went out of him” while he was upon the earth, into every appointed ordinance in which we minister. What unreserved, unlimited obedience do you all owe to the Lord Jesus Christ! As members of his Church, and



subjects of his government, and heirs of his everlasting kingdom, you are bound to yield unto him the entire reverence and devotion of your hearts, the undivided service of your lives. God hath commanded you, that whatever you do, you do it in the name of the Lord Jesus ; he is the only true way to life. In his righteousness alone can acceptance with God be procured ; through the operation of his Spirit alone can a holy character be formed, and strength obtained for bringing forth fruit unto eternal life.

See that you reject not Christ, when by his ministers he speaketh to you from heaven ; when he calls, do not refuse, when he stretcheth forth his hand, do not disregard it. Is it not to be feared that in these days of boasted light and liberality, many are satisfied with observing the external forms of godliness while they have never experienced its power ? Beware of supposing that a bare attendance upon the means of grace is religion, that the observance of the forms of prayer is prayer. There are many who attend the house of God, and observe family worship, who never have experienced a change of heart, and consequently are not Christians ; yet how common is it for men to flatter themselves that their state is safe, because they have adopted a sound creed, and perform enjoined duties ! How many are there who hate doctrinal errors, and yet perish by those which are practicable ! How many are there who hate false doctrines, and perish by a false heart !

Besides, consider that a dependence upon your own worth and works is a delusion by which many are snared to their eternal ruin. Morality is very valuable as a means of promoting the order and peace of civil society. It cannot be too highly valued. But the greatest amount of it is not saving grace, nor will it entitle any sinful

being to heavenly bliss. It may exist where the heart is unchanged, and where all crimes stand uncanceled. That which sinks the soul into perdition is not the existence of virtue, but reliance upon it. You presume that because you are adorned with an amiable disposition, and distinguished by such a variety of good works, you must be the favourites of heaven, and in due time be admitted there. Even among those who have obtained a Christian education, and adopted a sound creed, the delusion is either directly or indirectly cherished. Morality strikes off only the outward branches ; grace lays the axe to the root of corruption. Morality imparts the appearance only ; grace the reality. Morality may make a very useful member of society ; grace alone can make a member of the body of Christ.

Consider that the grand object of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the end of religion, and of the publication of the merciful counsels of God for your salvation, was to recover men to holiness here and to happiness hereafter. If you would have the preaching of the Word to be of real benefit to you, you must receive it with meekness and humility. It is humility, submission, and a readiness of mind to admit and entertain the truths of God that he requires of you. The teachableness which the gospel requires is not a blind and implicit belief of what the ministers of the Word deliver, but a sincere desire to be instructed in the whole will of God. If you come in this happy disposition to hear the Word preached, it will make good and lasting impressions upon your hearts, and prove unto you the power of God unto salvation. Be active and diligent, therefore, in being not only hearers but doers of the Word of God. The earth does not profitably receive the grain that is sown in it, unless it be previously prepared. Neither will your hearts receive

with advantage the good seed of the Word, unless they be opened by meditation and prayer. Your diligence ought to appear by giving a careful and serious attention to the Word when you hear it preached. If what hath been said upon this subject awaken in you a greater respect and veneration for gospel ordinances,—if it inspire you with a steadfast determination to correct your past negligence, and render you more attentive to the preaching of the Word, and more ready to put it in practice,—then the preaching of your pastor will not be in vain, nor your hearing in vain. It is a frequent and fatal mistake to separate religion from the duties of active life. The test by which you ought to examine the genuineness of your faith, by which you ought to try the strength and stability of your religious principle, is the effect produced on your conduct in your intercourse with society. In the day of trial have these principles sustained you? In your combats with an evil world have they brought you off victorious? Amidst the seductions of passion, and the temptations of evil example, and the ridicule of the profane, have you stood firm as a rock, looking unto Jesus, trusting in God, triumphing in the hope of immortality? These are questions by which you may discover how far you are removed from the character of those who are only hearers and not doers of the Word. Not only must your hearts be prepared and the seed sown in a good soil, but heaven must shed its blessed influences, and the Sun of Righteousness must shine upon it, and the warmth of heavenly love must cherish it, and the dew of Divine grace must distil upon it, and even the clouds of adversity must frown, and the rain-drops of affliction must water it. He who has commanded you to grow in grace has also promised that his grace shall be sufficient for you.

You know to whom you may freely apply for aid. Christ came, not merely that you might have life, but that you might have it more abundantly. Take courage, then, and open your blossoms to the genial influences which he sheds around you.

In conclusion—Cherish a high sense of the pastoral office. Treat your pastor with all the esteem, which as a spiritual instructor and guide, he may justly claim. Pray much for him. He is engaged in a conflict. He is a soldier of the cross. He is fighting with the powers of the world and with Satan. Lift up your hands in prayer for him, and keep them lifted up, that you may see him triumphant in the battle. Render due regard to his official authority, and be always ready to co-operate with him, in all his efforts, to promote the welfare of the Church and the spread of religion.

May he who gives the increase, when Paul plants and Apollos waters, produce and cherish by his Word and Spirit those precious dispositions in your souls. May his doctrine drop as the rain and his speech distil as the dew ; and may the soil in every one of you be like a well-watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.

CONCLUDING PRAYER.

We adore and magnify thee, O gracious God, as the author of all our blessings, and the source of all our happiness. Do thou take us into covenant with thee, and do thou draw near in mercy to hear and help us. We would ever consider it as our highest honour and greatest privilege to call upon God by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. But we would especially praise thee for the unmerited, yet still continued, communications of thy goodness and grace to us.

Thou, O Lord, hast in thy great goodness bestowed upon us spiritual blessings of the most valuable nature. Thou hast vouchsafed to us a written revelation of thy will, in which thou hast graciously unfolded to us the relation in which we stand unto thee,—in which we are informed of our own sinfulness, of our lost and ruined condition, and of what thou in thy infinite goodness hast done, and our Saviour has suffered for our redemption. We pray, O Lord, that we may be enabled to esteem this revelation as a most invaluable blessing ; that we may study it with the most serious attention, and that we may be guided by thy Spirit to the true interpretation of it, and by the same Spirit may be led to the proper use of it. May we by means of thy Word be made to feel our need of this redemption which was procured by Jesus Christ ; and by thy Spirit may we be made to see the manner in which we are to become partakers of this salvation. May we be made sensible of our utter inability to deliver ourselves from that state of misery and wretchedness into which we have fallen by sinning against thee. And may we be made to see the way of life as it is pointed out in the Gospel by Jesus Christ ; may we see that he is the way, the truth, and the life, that no man cometh unto the Father but by him ; and may we remember the declaration of Jesus, that whosoever cometh unto him he will in nowise cast out. May we therefore come unto thee by faith, trusting in the declarations of thy Word, and relying on the efficacy of our Saviour's righteousness, and the all-sufficiency of his atonement. For Christ's sake, may our past sins be all forgiven, and may our dispositions to evil be wholly subdued—may we be guided by thy Spirit in the way of truth, and restrained from every sinful act. May we advance from one degree of grace unto another,

until at last we arrive at the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.

We fervently pray, O Lord, that the solemn services in which we have now been engaged may be sanctified to us. May they by thy blessing have a tendency to wean our hearts more and more from the world, and to fix our thoughts and affections on those things which are spiritual and eternal.

(Here take in the text.)

Be very favourable, O Lord, to the vine which thou hast planted amongst us, thy church subsisting in every difference of administration. Uphold the gospel ministry. We would plead with thee for all the ministers of Christ. Inspire them with compassion for souls—may they feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood, the Church of which the Holy Ghost has made them overseers. May they preach so fully and so explicitly, that it may be as though Christ himself had come preaching peace. Standing in Christ's stead, from him must they derive, not only all their authority, but all their success.

To the kindness of thy providence, and the riches of thy grace, we, O Lord, commend thy servant, whom we have this day ordained a minister over this people, to supply the place of him who has been called to give an account of his stewardship. May the Spirit of the Lord be upon him. May he share largely and increasingly in the influences of thy Holy Spirit. May thy Spirit dwell in his heart, as in a temple, and impart to him a resemblance to thine own perfections, and apply to him in all its fulness the salvation of the gospel. May the gospel which he preaches prove, in his own experience, as a well of living water, springing up into everlasting life. May he be so influenced by thy grace, as to be found faithful ;

and while he watches for souls, as those that must give a count, grant that his words may be so heard and receive that he may be able to give account of his people with joy and not with grief.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst powerfully impress upon the minds and hearts of the people in this parish the testimonies of the gospel, the faithful saying which is worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came to save sinners. May they receive him who has this day been set over them in the Lord with all gladness, and may they esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. From his lips let many learn the way of salvation. Impress upon them the justice, the fitness, the necessity of remembering him and his work always in their prayers. May they receive the Spirit by the hearing of faith. Let thy Word profit them, being mixed with faith ; yea, being engrafted, may it save their souls.

Bless, O Lord, the court of thy Church with which we are connected. Bless every member of it. Bless them in their ministrations to their flocks. Lord, give to them abundantly of their Master's spirit. May the places of thy servants who are called to leave the world be filled by a fresh generation of faithful, active, zealous disciples, who in their turn, shall transmit to the generation following the praises of the Lord our God. Send forth, O Lord, thy light and thy truth to all nations ; disperse the dark clouds of idolatry, impiety, superstition, and infidelity ; set up thy kingdom of peace and righteousness throughout the earth. Continue, we beseech thee, to bless our land with peace, liberty, and the light of the gospel. Bless the Queen, the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and every branch of the Royal Family. Provide for the nation, O God, rulers and magistrates such as are able men, who fear thee and hate covetousness.

Prosper, O God, the means of instruction provided for the young, and do thou open their hearts to attend to the things that are spoken to them.

Visit with thy compassion and saving grace all that are in affliction, and teach them to profit by thy chastisements. Prepare the dying for their great change, and sanctify bereaving dispensations to all who experience them. Prepare us for the various changes of this mortal life; and lead us, in every visitation, to see thy hand, and to submit to thy will. Above all things may we seek thy glory, that when this mortal life is ended, we may then be made partakers of immortality in thy most blessed and glorious kingdom.

Pardon the imperfections of our sacred services. Be with us in singing thy praises. Dismiss us with thy blessing. Carry us in safety to our respective dwellings. Hear us, O God, and answer us through the infinite riches of thy grace and goodness in Christ Jesus, our only Saviour. Amen.

PSALM CXXXII. 7-9, 13-15.

Intimation to the following effect is usually given, before pronouncing the blessing, by the officiating clergyman :—

The members of the congregation will have an opportunity of taking their minister by the hand, and of bidding him welcome among them, as they retire from the church.

BLESSING.

May the love of God the Father, the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the communion and

fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you and with the people of God, now, henceforth, and for ever. A

After the congregation is dismissed, the Act directs that the Presbytery shall resume their sitting ; at which the minister so admitted shall be required to subscribe anew the Confession of Faith and formula of this Church and his name, if not already standing on the roll of the Presbytery, is added thereto.

ADMISSION OF A MINISTER FORMERLY ORDAINED.

AT the admission of a minister already ordained, the minister presiding, after having preached, shall narrate the cause of the vacancy, and the steps which have been taken towards filling it up, and shall then put the prescribed questions to him, and call on him to declare his adherence to, and renewal of, the answers formerly given. On his making such declaration, the minister presiding shall, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great King and Head of the Church, and by authority of the Presbytery, solemnly admit him to the pastoral charge of that parish or congregation, with a right to all the privileges and fruits of the benefice. The brethren present shall give him the right hand of fellowship, and suitable exhortations shall be addressed from the pulpit to him and the people.

ORDINATION OF ELDERS.

THE elders are a body of men chosen from the congregation, constituting, with the minister, the kirk-session of the parish. In the First Book of Discipline the qualifications of elders are very fully stated thus :—"Men of best knowledge in God's word and cleanest life, most faithful and of most honest conversation, that can be found in the Kirk," (chap. x. 1.) The judicatories of the Church are required by the Assembly to take good heed that none be admitted to or continued in the office of an elder but such as are "tender and circumspect in their walk, and punctual in their attending upon ordinances, and strict in their observance of the Lord's-day, and in regularly keeping up the worship of God in their families," (Assembly 1722, ix.) It is required, moreover, that they be in full communion with the church in connexion with the congregation over which they are placed, and have attained the age of twenty-one years, (Assembly 1816, x.)

When vacancies occur among the elders, the persons to supply them are chosen by the kirk-session ; and intimation of such choice is publicly made to the congregation at *least ten free days* before the new elders are to be admitted,

that if any objections to their suitableness can be stated, such objections may be made known to the kirk-session.

If no objections be lodged, then, on the day which has been announced, the minister, at the conclusion of the sermon, proceeds :—

Messrs — (Here the individuals named stand up in the elders' pew),—You have, by the unanimous approval of the members of session in this parish, been elected as fit persons for undertaking the office of elders ; and your election has, according to established form, been notified to this congregation, in order to ascertain whether any member or members thereof have anything to allege why you should not be invested in that office ; and as no person has brought anything to our knowledge against your moral character and qualifications for bearing such office, and as you have signified to us your willingness to undertake it, and to perform the duties thereof, we proceed to ordain you according to the rules and usages of our Church.

Now, that this congregation of God's people, with whom you this day stipulate to perform certain duties, may be satisfied that you are sound in the Christian faith, and that you undertake your office not by constraint, but willingly, I proceed, previously to ordination, to put to you the following questions :—

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners ?

Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, approved by the General Assembly of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1699, to be the truths of God ; and do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith ?

Do you sincerely own the purity of worship authorised and practised in this Church ; and are you persuaded that the Presbyterian government and discipline, now so happily established therein, are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto ?

Do you promise that, in your practice, you will conform yourselves to the said worship ; that you will submit yourselves to the said discipline and government ; that you will never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same ; and that you will follow no divisive courses from the present establishment in the Church ?

Do you accept of the office of an elder of this parish, and promise, through grace, faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge the duties thereof ?

Satisfactory answers having been given to these questions, I now proceed to ordain you to the office of the eldership by prayer and supplication.

ORDINATION PRAYER.

Almighty God, we adore thee as the Maker of all things. Thou art the fountain of life and of happiness. Thine is the greatness, and the power, and the glory. We offer thee the homage of our hearts. Thou alone art worthy of all our praises. We thank thee that thou hast sent us consolation and good hope through grace, making the day-spring from on high to shine on us, and that to us thou hast given the glad tidings of the gospel. Kings and prophets desired to see the things that we see, and have not seen them—to hear the things that we hear, and have not heard them. Help us to value our privileges, and so to use them that thy name may be glorified.

We bless thee, merciful Father, for the knowledge of

Christ as reconciling us to thee by his death, and as ever living to make intercession for us. We bless thee that, through him, we have access to thy throne. We bless thee for his heavenly instructions, for his holy example, for his glorious atonement, for the fountain which is opened to cleanse us from all iniquity, and for the inheritance thou hast reserved for all who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Oh that we may be brought to know more of that love of Christ which passeth knowledge; that we may be filled with all the fulness of God, and love him with all our heart, and all our mind, and all our strength; that we may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that we may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. We pray, O Lord, that those who are invested with offices in thy Church may be deeply impressed with the importance of the trust committed to them, and of the responsibility that attaches to it. May thy blessing, O Lord, rest upon thy servants whom we now ordain and set apart to the office of the eldership among this people. May their minds be the seat of all those gifts and graces which are necessary to qualify them for the duties of their office. Let thy life be strong in them. May the Holy Spirit direct and govern them, strengthen and assist them, animate and invigorate them through the whole of their duty. May they be thoroughly furnished for vindicating and defending the doctrine and discipline of thy Church. Stamp an absolute aim and direction of usefulness on all their pursuits. Grant that religion may adorn their character and life. May they preserve the order and fellowship of the gospel. Whatever talents thou hast intrusted to them, help them to

employ them aright. In all things may their conduct be such as thou wilt approve.

And do thou, O Lord, enrich with all heavenly and spiritual blessings the people of this parish and congregation, that they may ever act dutifully towards them who are this day set over them. May they receive them in the Lord with all gladness, who come to them with the counsels of fathers, and with the kindness of friends. May they receive in meekness the admonitions they may be called to tender them, and render them that honour and respect which are due to those who watch for their spiritual welfare. Oh, fill them with the knowledge, and the love, and the obedience of thy will.

Hear our prayers, O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, and accept of us in Jesus Christ, our blessed Mediator and most merciful Redeemer. Amen.

In name and by authority of Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church, I do receive and admit you to the office of elders in this session and parish; and your brethren of the session will now give you the right hand of fellowship.

ADDRESS TO THE ELDERS.

As you are now invested with a most sacred, spiritual, and responsible office in the Church of Christ, let me exhort you to be faithful and conscientious, and assiduous in discharging the duties of it, which are of a very delicate nature indeed, when you consider yourselves as inspectors of the moral conduct of others, and furtherers of the interests of pure and undefiled religion among men. This consideration should make you exceedingly watchful over your own conduct. "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."

The apostle Paul states, in general, that the work of elders is to rule the Church. The keys of government are not committed to one, but to Church officers acting together with the pastors in managing the affairs of the Church. The best interest of every ecclesiastical community requires that there be a constant and faithful inspection of all the members and families of the Church ; that the negligent be admonished ; that wanderers be reclaimed ; that scandals be removed ; that irregularities be corrected ; that differences be reconciled ; and every proper measure adopted to bind the whole body together by the ties of Christian purity and charity. It is your duty, then, to have an eye of inspection and care over all the members of the congregation, and for this purpose to cultivate a universal and intimate acquaintance, as far as may be, with every family in the flock of which you are made "overseers." You are bound to watch over the children and youth with paternal vigilance, recognising and affectionately addressing them on all proper occasions, giving them, and their parents in reference to them, seasonable counsel, and putting in the Lord's claim to their hearts and lives. Every part of Divine truth ought at one time or another to be set before them, and every duty inculcated ; but the great essentials without which there can be no salvation should be testified more earnestly and frequently ; nor can you have a better summary of them than this of the apostle, even "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ," with their genuine fruits and effects. Without these no sinner can escape destruction ; and with these none will come short of eternal life. It is your duty to attend to the case of those who are serious, and disposed to inquire concerning their eternal interest, to converse with them, and from time to time to give information concerning

them to their pastor. It is your duty to take notice of, and admonish in private, those who appear to be growing careless, or falling into habits in any respect criminal, suspicious, or unpromising. It is your duty to visit and pray with the sick, and request the attendance of the pastor on the sick and the dying, when it may be seasonable or desired. You are likewise to concur with your pastor in the exercise of discipline, according to the Word of God and the constitution of the Church founded thereon. It is your duty to see that none be admitted to the communion of the Church without a careful examination in reference to their knowledge, orthodoxy, good moral character, and hopeful piety ; that none be permitted to remain in the bosom of the Church, without maintaining, in some tolerable degree, a character proper for professing Christians ; that none be suspended from the enjoyment of Church privileges but after a fair trial ; and that none be finally excommunicated from the covenanted family of Christ, without the most patient inquiry, and every suitable effort to bring them to repentance and reformation. It is incumbent on you to consult frequently and freely with your pastor on the interests of the flock committed to your charge ; to aid him in forming and executing plans for the welfare of the Church ; to give him information as he may need, to enable him to perform aright his various and momentous duties ; to enforce his just admonitions ; and, in a word, by every means in your power, to promote the comfort and extend the usefulness of his labours. These are some of the duties which all who bear the office of elders in the Church of Christ are bound faithfully, zealously, and prudently to discharge. Be assured that fidelity in the discharge of the duties of your office, and holy living, are the sure way to obtain the favour of God, and to advance the interests of his

Church. Be blameless in your walk and conversation. Higher attainments in piety and virtue are expected in office-bearers of the Church than in other men. The deeper the sense of your own unfitness, the more likely will you be to apply unceasingly and importunately for heavenly aid, and the nearer you live to the throne of grace, the more largely will you partake of that wisdom and strength which you need. Seek, then, the grace of God and the teaching of his Spirit, without which all your efforts for your own good and for the good of others will prove utterly unavailing. Pray that he may make his grace sufficient for you, and perfect his strength in your weakness. Pray for yourselves, pray for those over whom the Holy Ghost hath made you "overseers." And pray for me that I may be faithful to the trust committed to me. You and I must give an account to Christ how we have managed the trust reposed in us. If we be faithful we shall obtain a crown of life, and glory that fadeth not away. To God and to his grace I now commend — you ; may his blessing rest upon you and abide with you for ever ! Amen.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE.

Dear Brethren, every consideration which has been urged to shew the importance and duties belonging to the office of ruling elders ought to remind you of the important duties which you owe to them. Remember at all times that they are your ecclesiastical rulers. In all your views and treatment of them, then, recognise this character. Obey them "in the Lord ;" that is, for his sake, and as far as they bear rule agreeably to his Word. "Esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake," and follow them daily with your prayers, that God would

bless them, and make them a blessing. Reverence them as your leaders. Bear in mind the importance of their office, the arduousness of their duties, and the difficulties with which they have to contend. Countenance and sustain them in every act of fidelity, make allowance for their infirmities; be not unreasonable in your expectations from them.

Your elders will sometimes be called to the painful exercise of discipline. Be not offended with them for the performance of this duty. Rather make the language of the Psalmist your own, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Receive their private warnings and admonitions with candour and affectionate submission. Treat their public acts, however contrary to your wishes, with respect and reverence. If they be honest and pious men, can they do less than exercise the discipline of Christ's house against such of you as walk disorderly? Nay, if you be honest and pious yourselves, can you do less than approve of their faithfulness in exercising that discipline? If you were aware of all the difficulties which attend this part of the duty of the eldership, you would feel for them more tenderly, and judge concerning them more candidly and indulgently than you are often disposed to do. Here you have it in your power, in a very important degree, to lessen their burdens, and to strengthen their hands. When elders visit your families for the purpose of becoming acquainted with them, and of aiding the pastor in ascertaining the spiritual state of the flock, remember that it is nothing more than their duty. Convince them, by the reception you give them, that you wish to encourage them in promoting the best interests of the Church, and that you honour them for their fidelity.

Give them an opportunity of seeing your children, and of ascertaining whether your households are making progress in the Christian life. Nay, encourage your children to put themselves in the way of the elders, that they may be personally known to them, and may become the objects of their affectionate notice, their occasional exhortation, and their pious prayers. Converse with the elders freely, as with fathers, who "have no greater joy than to see you walking in the truth." And ever give them cause to retire under the pleasing persuasion that their office is honoured; that their benevolent designs are duly appreciated, and that their labours "are not in vain in the Lord." When you are sick send for them to pray over you. This is one of the rules of the gospel; why will you live in the neglect of it? You should receive pain and sickness as the chastisement of the Lord, and seek for relief from Him, whatever instrument or means you employ for that purpose. The counsels and prayers of the ministers and elders of Christ are peculiarly desirable on such occasions; and you ought more earnestly to seek the pardon of your sins, and the healing of your souls, than the removal of your bodily sufferings. "The Lord is pitiful, and of tender mercy;" and they are happy who patiently trust in Him and keep His commandments. May you all be brought under the sweetly constraining influence of grace; may you surrender up your hearts to God, and, in the persevering exercise of faith and patience, be followers of them who now inherit the promises. Amen.

The same form is gone through in the admission of an elder already ordained, with the exception of the ordination prayer. After Divine service on the day of admission, the minister, after stating the different sta

have been taken in the matter, shall then put the prescribed questions to him, and call on him to declare his adherence to, and renewal of, the answers formerly given.

In the name and by authority of Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, I do receive and admit you to the office of the eldership in this session and parish, and your brethren of the session will now give you the right hand of fellowship.

At the conclusion of the service and at the adjourned meeting of session, the newly-ordained elders being now present, are required to sign the formula; and their names are then ordered to be added to the roll.

The election of elders is given in some parishes to the members in full communion, and may be made in any convenient way, so as to secure that the persons chosen be *bona fide* the choice of the majority of the people. The session alone determines when it is expedient to have an election of elders, and what number is required; and it takes the whole steps in the matter.

ORDINATION OF DEACONS.

THE office to which the deacon was appointed by the apostles was to take care of the temporal concerns of the church, and especially to preside over the collections and disbursements for the poor. It is the name given to a distinct ecclesiastical office.* In the book of the Acts we have a detailed account of the institution. The Epistle to the church at Philippi is specially sent to the deacons and ministers of the gospel in that city; and the same writer, in his First Epistle to Timothy, after describing the character and qualifications of a faithful minister, describes not less clearly those of the deacon, evidently shewing that the offices were not only distinct, but permanent in the Christian Church.

It is a defect and fault in some congregations, that the offices of elder and deacon, which are entirely different in their nature, and which ought undoubtedly to be separated in practice, and to be discharged by different persons, are not distinctly maintained; they so confound and mingle them together as if they were both one; either appointing none for the office of deacon, but leaving that

* First Book of Discipline, chap. ii., p. 74.

charge also upon the elders, or else giving the deacon the same power and employment with the elders. It is true, whatsoever the deacon may do by virtue of his office, that same may be done by an elder, as whatsoever is done by an elder may be done by a minister ; because the higher and more eminent officers in the church include the powers of the lower. It is also true that the deacons may assist in judgment with the ministers and elders,* and be helping to them in those things that concern the oversight of the congregations by information and advice ; yet it is necessary that congregations should so far regard the ordinances and reverence the wisdom of God in appointing these officers, as to have both elders and deacons, and to preserve them distinct in their acting and operations, not giving to the deacons, or suffering them to assume the elder's office.

The main duty of deacons is to collect, receive, and distribute the whole ecclesiastical goods to them to whom they are appointed. These duties they must perform at the discretion and by the appointment of the ministers and elders ; for which cause, and not for government, they are to be present at the ordinary meetings of the eldership. We have not the least evidence, from any source, that the function of government was ever connected with the deacon's office. We read of ruling elders, but never of ruling deacons. They have therefore no vote in matters of church discipline, but have a right to sit in the kirk-session, and to join in the deliberations of that court.

Deacons, besides ministering to the poor of the church, are with great propriety made the managers of all the money-tables or fiscal concerns of each congregation.

* First Book of Discipline, chap. ii., p. 57.

There are very important services in reference to pecuniary concerns which they might manage, and which it is believed would be greatly beneficial to the church, if they were considered as at all times bound to manage, and should manage with wisdom, energy, and zeal. I refer to the church's contributions to the various objects of Christian enterprise which distinguish the present day. That these contributions to the cause of the Bible, of missions, foreign and domestic, of Sabbath-schools, and of the various other Christian and benevolent undertakings for promoting knowledge, virtue, and happiness, temporal and eternal, among men, ought to be continued and greatly increased, no one who looks into the Bible, or who knows anything of the Christian spirit, can for a moment doubt. It is quite evident, too, that these contributions ought to be perfectly voluntary; and any attempt to render them otherwise would be both unscriptural and mischievous. But would it not tend to render the whole business of liberality to the cause of Christ more regular, more easy, more abundant, and ultimately more productive, if it were placed under the enlightened advice and wise management of six or eight deacons in each church. The truth is, an enlightened, active, pious board of deacons might place this whole subject on such a footing; and when they had gotten it fairly arranged, and put in operation, might manage it in such a manner as, without adding in the least degree to the burdens of the people, would render their contributions more productive, as well as more easy and economical in every part of their management. Though their office is secular, yet notwithstanding the Church has been no less strict in requiring that they be men "tender and circumspect in their walk, punctual in their attending upon ordinances, and strict in their observance

of the Lord's-day, and in regularly keeping up the worship of God in their families." (Ass. 1722, Act ix., Sess. 2.)

As to what respects the election, trial, ordination, and admission, continuance and number of deacons, the same form may be gone through as was done concerning elders, *mutatis mutandis*. There must be a minute recording their election, and appointing their edict to be served. There must be a minute stating that the court (kirk-session with deacons) had met for the purpose of receiving any objections which might be lodged by the people; and there must be another recording the fact of their ordination, and stating that they had signed the Confession of Faith, and that their names had been added to the roll of deacons.

After divine service on the day of ordination, the minister, after stating the different steps which have been taken in the matter, proposes the following questions to the persons about to be ordained, to which satisfactory answers require to be given in presence of the congregation :—

QUESTIONS PUT BEFORE ORDINATION.

Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament to be the Word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners?

Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine of the Confession of Faith, approved by the General Assembly of this National Church, and ratified by law in the year 1699, to be the truths of God? and do you own the whole doctrine therein contained as the confession of your faith?

Do you sincerely own the purity of worship authorised

and practised in this Church? and are you persuaded that the Presbyterian government and discipline, now so happily established therein, are founded upon the Word of God, and agreeable thereto?

Do you promise that, in your practice, you will conform yourselves to the said worship; that you will submit yourselves to the said discipline and government; that you will never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion of the same; and that you will follow no divisive courses from the present establishment in the Church?

Do you accept the office of deacons of this parish; and promise, through grace, faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully to discharge the duties thereof?

Satisfactory answers having been given to these questions, I now proceed to ordain you to the office of the deaconship by prayer and supplication.

ORDINATION PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God! we draw near to thy throne with the deepest reverence, adoring thy glorious perfections, confessing our sins, and supplicating thy gracious regard and unmerited mercy. Grant us the aids of thy grace, and the influence of thy Holy Spirit, that we may offer thee an acceptable sacrifice, and may find access, through our great Mediator, by one spirit, to the Father.

O thou that hearest prayer, unto whom all flesh shall come, we, thy dependent creatures, are encouraged by thine invitations, and by all our experience of thy goodness, to renew and persevere in our application to thy abounding grace. While we prostrate ourselves before

thee, do thou of thine infinite love extend mercy to remember us with the favour thou bearest to thine own, visit us with thy salvation.

We feel, O our God, that our obligations to thee infinite, and thy mercies toward us can never be requited with adequate praise.

Holy Father, thy mercies remind us of our sins, all the gifts of thy goodness convict us of the guilt of ingratitude. It was because we had destroyed ourselves that it was necessary for thee to interpose to save us. In infinite mercy thou hast provided the means of recovery and restoration. Thou hast sent thine only begotten Son into the world to be our Saviour; thou hast set him forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare thy righteousness, for the remission of our sins. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ Jesus; for thou hast made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made righteous of God in him.

May it be given us to believe on his name. Give us to experience that abundant consolation that is provided for those who have fled for refuge to the hope set before them. May we obtain life from his death, peace from his conflicts, healing from his wounds.

Make us deeply sensible, we beseech thee, O Lord, of the advantages with which thou hast favoured us, and dispose and enable us to improve them to thy glory.

And we pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst bestow thy Spirit in rich effusion upon thy servants whom thou namest and by thine authority we now set apart and ordain to the office of Deacons in this parish. Enrich their understandings with the knowledge of thy truth and replenish their souls with the gifts and graces of thy Spirit. May they be men of honest report, endued with

heavenly wisdom, full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, that they be rich in good works, and thoroughly furnished therein, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and ministering to the necessities of the saints. As thou hast blessed them, make them also a blessing to others, in these and all other ways in which thine infinite wisdom may see fit to employ them as instruments for doing good, whether in the things of time or those of eternity. May they anxiously endeavour to search out and supply the wants of the poor.

We pray that thou wouldst bless and prosper their labours for the support of a gospel ministry, whereby adequate means of religious instruction may be afforded to the people of all ranks and conditions. To thee may they defer all their plans and enterprises. In their intercourse with society, enable them to be upright and conscientious in all their dealings. May they acknowledge thee in all their ways.

And grant, O Lord, that this congregation of thy people, amongst whom thy servants are appointed to labour, in obtaining the means necessary for promoting every Christian object, may receive them as becometh those who are truly alive to the importance and responsibility of their office and of the duties they have to discharge, that their hearts may be encouraged and their hands strengthened. Do thou, O Lord, open the hearts and hands of those whom thou hast blessed with abundance; let their stores be for others as well as for themselves. May they be convinced that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and that thou, O God, lovest a cheerful giver. Bind society together by the ties of mutual goodwill and kind offices. Oh, may thy Spirit dwell in the hearts of this congregation; may he diffuse his hallowing influence through all their affections, mo-

tives, and desires. Make them pure in heart; and conform them in soul, in body, and in spirit, to the whole will of God.

Hear these our requests, O thou merciful Father; and to thee the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed the praise without end. Amen.

In name and by authority of Jesus Christ, the only Head of the Church, I do receive and admit you to the office of the Deaconship in this parish, and the members of the Session and of the Deacons' Court will now give you the right hand of fellowship.

ADDRESS TO THE DEACONS.

My Friends and Fellow-Labourers, the office to which you have now been appointed and ordained, is highly important and responsible, and, like every other office in the Christian Church, demands qualifications adapted to the discharge of its duties.

Every office in the Church requires, and should possess, decided piety. Not only is this indispensable for the Deaconship itself, but because the office may be a step to a higher. Hence the apostolic counsel and qualification. The well qualified Deacon must hold the mystery of the faith in a "pure conscience." He must be strongly and conscientiously attached to it. He must be prepared to make sacrifices for it. He must not abandon it for the world,—in short, he must be conscientious and resolute.

The office of Deacon solely regards what may be termed the secular interests of the Church. It is expressly distinguished from the spiritual, properly so called, and was originally instituted to set the spiritual free from secular occupation. It is not unnatural to

suppose that, as Christianity, though spiritual in itself, deals with men still in the body, and affects, while it is so far dependent for its propagation upon, temporal interests, so that there should be some office in connexion with it to take charge of its secular concerns; and this, accordingly, is precisely the design of the office of Deacon. There would have been an obvious defect,—at least an unnecessary, and, it may be, injurious blending of the secular and the sacred,—had there been no such office.

The original institution was designed, as you will find from the 6th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, to meet the case of a particular class of widows; but the office was not created to meet this or all classes of widows exclusively, or even of the whole Christian poor alone. It contemplated a wider sphere, even the separation of the spiritual office of the apostleship and ministry from all unnecessary secular occupation. The case of poor widows came first, but there would soon have been the care of the general poor; and even though these might have been otherwise provided for, yet the collection of means for the maintenance of the ministry and places of worship, and to defray the expenses of the administration of ordinances, would have required such an order of office-bearers as the deacon. The principle which governed the appointment was, "It is not fit, it is not proper or becoming, for the ministers of the gospel to leave the Word of God, and to serve tables." Whether the tables be those of the poor, or for receiving and paying away money for any cause connected with the Christian Church, such as Christian missions, still they involve work more or less secular, which others can attend to, and from which it is most desirable that the ministers of religion should be set free.

The office of Deacon was restricted to the temporal interests of the Church, and was to be permanent in its nature. It was designed to form a part of the constitution of the Church in all countries and in all ages.

It is plain, then, there is a call for such an office as that of Deacon, inasmuch as we are assured on the highest authority, that there shall be poor needing its kind office in all ages, and inasmuch as Christianity provides, in its spirit and principles, for liberality to the poor. That such an office is required, that the liberality which true religion creates may be directed aright, and guarded against becoming a source of evil. This applies not only to the management of the funds for the poor, but to the general pecuniary revenues of the Church. Where it is necessary that wealth, whether for the support of the poor, or the maintenance of the ministry, or the general extension of the Church, shall be collected together, and employed by Christians, it is almost essential that there be a body of men, whose distinct office and care it shall be to administer the funds, and who shall be responsible to the Church.

Such being the nature of the office to which you have been set apart, and such are some of the duties that now devolve upon you to discharge, it becomes me to advert to some of the qualifications which the inspired volume demands in the Deacon. At the original institution three were mentioned. The seven Deacons were required to be men, 1st, of honest report; 2d, full of the Holy Ghost; 3d, of wisdom. In a case on which the peace of the Church and the welfare of its private members were obviously suspended, superior character was essential. It was necessary, first of all, that the Deacons be men of tried integrity, of an honesty which was above all suspicion. Money and other delicate interests were to be

committed to them, interests as to which their fellow-men were peculiarly jealous ; hence it was necessary not only that they be honest, but of honest report, that they should bear a good reputation among the members of the Church and in society generally. Though a man be of the strictest integrity in heart and conduct, yet if he do not sustain a blameless reputation with others he is not fit for the Deaconship. Next, they were to be men of the Holy Ghost,—men of decided piety, under the teaching and sanctifying grace of the Spirit. This is essential to animate with that activity, love, fidelity, zeal and perseverance which the duties of the office demand. It is only true piety which, during a long succession of years, will sustain the heart in tenderness to the poor amid trials and difficulties, and which will uphold the Deacon in the unwearied, and sometimes unrequited care of the house of God. And, lastly, he is to be a man of wisdom,—a man of discernment and prudence, not carried away by the impulse of his feelings, but one able intelligently to judge between real and unreal cases of indigence ; the proportion and manner in which charity should be dispensed ; the best advice which the circumstances, not only of the poor, but of the Church generally, in perplexing seasons may require.

Besides those qualifications, we have others given by Paul in the 3d chapter of 1st Timothy.

Animated by the spirit of your office, and acting out the character which the counsels of the Word imply, you will be kind, and tender, and sympathising, especially when in sickness, but withal firm, and not easily persuaded to what your judgment does not approve. You will also have a deep conviction of the insufficiency of all your efforts to benefit the poor of your charge without the blessing of God, and hence **you will not fail to seek**

that blessing in the exercise of diligent and persevering prayer for the Holy Spirit.

Sound piety, intelligence, a talent for business, tenderness for the poor, and good management at home, embrace the leading points. Let these in any fair measure be present, and no one who is called to the office should hesitate to accept. The apostle Paul evidently regards it as of high value ; and, important as it is, he teaches the Deacon to aspire after a sphere of more extensive usefulness. He calls upon Deacons to approve themselves more for the higher and more spiritual office of the Church. Surely it is to the honour of the office of Deacon that it is not only good in itself, but is a step and a preparation for higher good.

Let it, then, be your highest ambition to be useful while you live upon earth, to co-operate with God in the execution of his plans of mercy respecting mankind. Believe it, there is no true satisfaction to be enjoyed but that which springs from the consciousness of having done good. Look around you, and you will see a wide field open, and requiring your active services. Imitate your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who went about doing good. Walk in his steps. Use your most vigorous efforts to make happiness and charity and peace reign in the earth ; and then, in the midst of the tempests that agitate the world, you will enjoy a pleasing calm of soul, and anticipate that happy period when there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

ADDRESS TO THE CONGREGATION.

Dear Brethren, consider the special claims which the men whom you have now seen ordained to the office of

Deacons have on your sympathies and your prayers, as well as the special claims which the Christian and benevolent undertakings to which their lives are devoted have on your abounding liberality. The office they have undertaken is indeed important, and the right discharge of it will be productive of much advantage to the Church, both at home and abroad. While they labour to distribute your charities and promote every Christian enterprise, you are under sacred and binding obligations to contribute according to your ability the funds that may be required. If ever the gospel is to be made known to the ends of the earth, if ever the prophecies which proclaim the universality of Christ's kingdom are to be fulfilled, it must be by the instrumentality of human means. But unless you bestir yourselves, nothing can be done. All who exercise the virtues of beneficence and liberality have reason to believe that God hath a thousand and a thousand ways to increase their substance, or to provide for them in every time of need. It is true that all your works of charity and beneficence are nothing, and ought not to be compared with the infinite riches of the Divine mercy, which surpass all knowledge; and yet God hath been graciously pleased to establish a connexion between those things by the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. Your good works have nothing meritorious in them; but through the mercy of God in Christ they will receive a reward, not of debt, but of grace—not of merit, but of promise. You live by the mercy of God—you enjoy here the first-fruits of it, and look for the full harvest hereafter; and should not these considerations be motives to excite you to works of mercy and of beneficence?

There are many who believe that they are under no obligation of stretching out the hand to the destitute, and pretend to be exempted from the duties of charity.

Now, I affirm that charity is an indispensable obligation of all ranks, of all conditions, of all classes of society ; and this every one naturally feels and knows who loves religion. What is in reality the great, the fundamental principle of Christian morality ? It is the love of God and of man. No Christian is exempted from the duty of charity, which is of universal obligation.

Everything in religion must take its beginning in principle. Your worship is unworthy of God, if it be not spiritual and sincere ; your virtues are not acceptable to him, if they be not pure and persevering ; your alms are not precious, but in as far as charity is the soul and motive of them ; your religion is not genuine, if it do not proceed from the heart. It is not to the external actions that God looks, it is to the principle which produces them. " Whatsoever is not of faith," says the apostle Paul, " is sin,"—that is, in other words, the most splendid actions are, in the estimation of God, but vanity and nothing, if they be not dictated by the true spirit of religion. In vain, therefore, should a man bestow all his goods to feed the poor, if he be not animated by charity ; that sacrifice is of no value, while a glass of cold water presented by charity becomes an acceptable offering in the sight of God. Do you wish, then, to render yourselves agreeable to God ? Consecrate to him your hearts. It is the heart alone which will give a value to your virtues, holiness to your good works, efficacy to your alms, and reality to your religion.

If you find in your heart neither the insensibility of the Jewish priest nor the cold cruelty of the Levite, do you feel the warmth and tenderness of the Samaritan ? Does your charity proceed from right, from evangelical principles ? Is it as seasonable in its effects, as constant *in its exercise*, as superior to the claims of interest, as his

was? Carefully cultivate this gospel grace; labour to form in yourselves this resemblance of the Divine character, which constitutes your glory here below, and which, carried to perfection by the hand of grace, shall one day, in the highest heavens, be the unchangeable principle of that eternal felicity, which, through the infinite mercy of God in Christ, you hope to enjoy. Amen.

At the conclusion of the service, and at the adjourned Deacons' Court, the newly-ordained Deacons, being now present, are required to sign the formula, and their names are then ordered to be added to the roll.

PRAYERS FOR FAST-DAYS.

PRAYER FOR A FAST-DAY IN TIME OF WAR.

O ALMIGHTY and most righteous Lord ! we desire to prostrate ourselves before thee under an awful apprehension of thy judgments, and a deep conviction of our own sinfulness. Blessed are they who, in humility of soul, commit their way to thee, the Father of their spirits, and look beyond the things which are seen and temporal, to the things which are unseen and eternal.

Thou, O Lord, reignest over all the kingdoms of the world. Thou art perfectly just in thy government ; thou art righteous and upright in all thy judgments ; thou art just and true in all thy ways. Thou hast the disposal of all events, both in providence and grace. Thou art the Lord who exercisest judgment and righteousness in the earth. Everything that befalls us here is by thy permission, and all the changes which we daily observe taking place among the nations are accomplished by thy high decrees.

We, O Lord, might have lived in ignorance of thee ; we might have been born in a land where Christ is not named ; we might have been without Christ, having no

hope, and even without God in the world. But when we, O Lord, thus consider what we might have been, we bless thee that thou hast cast our lot in a land of light and of liberty where we enjoy so many valuable privileges and blessings. Blessed are all they who wait on thee, O Lord, not only in the ordinances of thy grace, but in the way of thy judgments ; in the full assurance that all thy ways, however dark they may seem for the present, are mercy and truth to them that keep thy covenant and thy testimonies.

When we, O Lord, look into the history of former ages and observe the wonderful revolutions which have taken place in the world, may we not consider them merely as the works of those who were the agents in them, or as the effects of chance, but may we view them as parts of a great scheme which thou art perpetually carrying on for the improvement and happiness of thy people.

When we enjoy prosperity, may we consider that we are accountable to thee for the use which we make of our blessings. When we are visited with adversity, may we console ourselves with the thought that thou afflictest not willingly, but as a tender and compassionate Father thou chastenest us for our profit, that we may consider our ways and apply our hearts unto wisdom. May we even consider that all the good we enjoy is unmerited, and that all the misery which we suffer is justly deserved, and is only to be viewed as the punishment of sin.

Do thou, O Lord, make us to see when we have erred, and help us not only to confess and lament what we have left undone, but to abhor and forsake what we have done amiss. We have sinned against the clearest light ; we have set at nought thy admonitions. We are deeply sensible that by our formality, our ingratitude for thy blessings, and by our abuse of our privileges, we have justly

provoked thee to visit us with thy judgments which thou hast denounced against us as a nation. We have justly provoked thee to visit us in anger, and to involve us in trouble and perplexity. We deserve that thou shouldst remove our candlestick out of its place, that thou shouldst deny us longer the means of grace, and the offers of salvation. And we feel even now, O Lord, when we are exploring our guilt and unworthiness, and when we would desire to turn again unto thee, that we deserve that thou shouldst say unto us as thou didst to those who scorned instruction of old—"Because I have called, and ye have refused, because I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; I also will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh!"

But, O Lord, we pray that thou wouldst not deal with us according to our deserts, but according to the multitude of thy tender mercies in Christ Jesus. We rejoice that thou hast encouraged us in all our distresses to flee unto thee who alone can help and deliver us. We desire, therefore, O Lord, in this the day of our national calamities, when visited with the alarms and ravages of war, and thereby involved in trying and dangerous scenes from which we, short-sighted creatures, see not a way of deliverance, to apply unto thee who canst make light to arise out of darkness, and canst bring order out of confusion.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst put a stop to the perils of warfare and the effusion of human blood. But if thou hast determined that the nations of the earth should chastise each other for their wickedness and infidelity, we pray that thou wouldst be on our side, and we shall triumph over the nations of the world joined in league against us. We pray for those brave men who *expose their lives by sea and land for our defence.* Cover

their heads in the hour of battle, and save them from their enemies. Inspire them with skill and valour, and crown their enterprises with victory, that thus our proud and insolent foes may be led to listen to such terms as will insure to us a safe, a permanent, and an honourable peace.

We lament the fate of those who have fallen in their country's cause. May we be sensible that under providence to their sacrifices we owe our safety, and to their perils we are indebted for the liberty we enjoy.

We likewise sympathise with those who mourn over the bleeding wounds of their sons and other relatives. May they, O Lord, be comforted with good accounts from them. Do thou heal their wounds, and restore them safe to their country and their friends.

Grant, O Lord, that those who are suffering by the desolations of war—that the many fathers and mothers who have thus been left childless—that the many widows who have been made desolate and who refuse to be comforted—and that the thousands of children who have been deprived of the protecting care of parents, may all bow down with resignation under the bereavements with which they have been visited. May they trust more implicitly in thee, the Rock of Ages, amidst all the changes and uncertainties of time, and do thou raise up for them benefactors in their time of need. May they say from the depth of their soul, In thee do we trust.

Oh, may the time soon come, when wars and rumours of wars shall cease to the end of the earth—when the sword shall be turned into the ploughshare—when the sound of the trumpet, summoning to battle, shall be heard no more. Let not those who should dwell together as brethren be ranged in hostile array against each other; let the hearts of the rulers of all nations be turned to

peace, and to study the ways by which they may benefit one another ; and let there be nothing to disturb in all thy holy mountain. Hear us, O Father, even for Christ's sake. Amen.

Psalm lx. 1 ; Psalm xxvii. 3 ; Psalm lv. 2 ; Psalm cxl. 7 ;
2 Chronicles xx. 3 ; 1 Samuel vii. 6 ; Esther iv. 3 ; Joshua
vii. 6 ; Judges xx. 26.

PRAYER FOR A FAST-DAY IN TIME OF GREAT SICKNESS
AND MORTALITY.

O most holy and righteous Lord God, we have sinned against thee to whom we are indebted for life and all its enjoyments. Thou hast revealed thy wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and hast declared, that except we repent, we shall all perish. May we be deeply humbled before thee, and do thou enable us to come to thee as our only refuge in this season of sickness and great mortality. Thou hast caused a fearful visitation to fall upon us, the pestilence which walketh in darkness. By a mysterious track it comes upon our land and the dwellers therein. May we look to the hand that smites us, and acknowledge the justness of the rod which thou hast laid upon us. We confess, O Lord, that we have not deserved to be free from that visitation of thy wrath which has afflicted other nations. We acknowledge with shame and contrition, that we have shewn ourselves unthankful for many special mercies vouchsafed to us, and have not made that return for our national blessings which thou mightest justly require at our hands. We have departed from thy commandments ; we have followed too much the things of this present world ; and in our prosperity we

have not sufficiently honoured thee, the author and giver of it all. Yet cast us not away, O Lord, in thy displeasure, but give us grace to turn to thee in repentance and prayer. When Israel had provoked thee to wrath, and thousands fell by the destroying pestilence, thou didst stay the sword of the avenging angel when the purpose of thy judgment was fulfilled. When the men of Nineveh repented of their iniquity, thou didst lay aside the fierceness of thine anger, and sparedst the guilty city, when thou sawest that they turned from their evil way.

And now, O Lord, we entreat thee, after thy rich mercy, to grant unto us thine afflicted servants, the like spirit of repentance, that thou mayest withdraw thy chastisements from our land, and stay the plague and grievous sickness which is abroad, making many desolate. Say to the destroying angel, It is enough—stay now thine hand. May the judgments which thou hast sent work in us a more lively faith, a more entire obedience, a more earnest endeavour to conform to thy will, and to advance thy glory. Grant these requests, O Father, we beseech thee, for the sake of thy beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

Psalm lxxviii. 50 ; Psalm xci. 3 ; Amos iv. 10 ; Jeremiah xiv.

PRAYER FOR A FAST-DAY IN TIME OF DEARTH OR FAMINE.

O eternal God, Lord of the world ! thou art the great and gracious preserver of man, we cry to thee in trouble ; do thou hear and deliver us from our distresses. From thee proceeds distress of nations, with perplexity. There is no counsel against thee. Thou dost shake every earthly

confidence beneath us ; men's hearts are from fear, and for looking after those things coming on the earth. Regard us in the necessities in which we are at present placed ; delight in the misery of thy creatures ; chastize for thine own pleasure, but for our thee are all the ordinances of heaven and of every season. Thou art asserting thy inflicting thy vengeance in preventing the sustenance the life of man, from yielding the vision of food, and in turning abundance Thou hast called the husbandman to mow famine is sore in our land. Though it hath to thee to withdraw the bounties of thy power to permit us to experience many privations, not to ourselves, nor deliver us into the enemies. Enable us to acknowledge that distress is of the Lord, and to say, Let it seemeth him good.

We acknowledge that by our abuse of forgetfulness of thy manifold mercies, we deserved punishment : we have sinned, we have sinned against thee ; yet knowing thee full of compassion, we beseech thee to visit thy judgments, to pardon the offences of thy people, to relieve the poor and the needy in their distress, and to give and to preserve to our use the earth in their season. May our land again yield an abundant increase. Whilst thy judgments are upon us may we learn righteousness. The darkness cheerless our outward lot may be, so much more closely may we cling to thee, and so much more earnestly may we seek after the joys that are beyond death and the grave. These our prayers

sent to thee, pleading the merits, and relying on the all-prevailing intercessions of our great High Priest, who with thyself and the Holy Spirit is one God, to whom be glory, both now and ever. Amen.

Psalm lxxxv. 1 ; Psalm xxxiii. 19 ; Psalm xxxvii. 19 ;
Psalm cv. 16 ; Joel i. 14 ; Joel ii.

PRAYERS FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING.

PRAYER FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING FOR PEACE.

O God, all the kingdoms of the world are thine, and thou givest them and the glory thereof to whomsoever thou wilt ; for thou art the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. In our perplexities we cried unto thee, and thou didst answer us. When our hearts were ready to fail us, and fears took hold on us, thou didst strengthen us with might in the inner man, and didst establish the work of our hands.

Thou, O God, hast wise and gracious views in all thy dispensations. As thy judgments, the sword, pestilence, and famine, are intended to humble, to soften, to correct, and convert us, by alarming our fears ; so thy benefits and mercies are designed to draw us to thyself by motives of love and gratitude.

We, O Lord, most humbly acknowledge thy goodness in the victories lately vouchsafed to our forces, by sea and land, over a host of foes who sought to spread desolation, misery, and poverty through extensive empires and flourishing states. We bless thee for having brought to a speedy and successful issue a war to which no occasion had been given by injustice on our part, or apprehension of injury at our hands ; but a war in which we were

inevitably involved, in order to check the projects of unbounded ambition, and to maintain the cause of justice, humanity, civilisation, and freedom in the world. To thee, O Lord, we ascribe the glory. It was thy wisdom which guided the counsels, thy power which strengthened the hands of those whom it pleased thee to use as thy instruments in the discomfiture of the lawless aggressors, and the frustration of their ambitious designs. From thee alone cometh victory, and the spirit of moderation and mercy in the day of success. Continue, we beseech thee, to go forth with our armies whensoever they are called into battle in a righteous cause ; and dispose the hearts of their leaders to exact nothing more from the vanquished than is necessary for the maintenance of peace, and security against violence and rapine.

Bless abundantly our Sovereign Lady, Queen Victoria. Do thou support her in the discharge of her arduous and important duties, and do thou enable her to govern her subjects, not only by wise and salutary laws, but also by the example of her virtues, that truth and righteousness and religion may flourish in her reign.

Above all, give thy grace to those who preside in the councils of our Sovereign, and administer the concerns of her widely-extended dominions, that they may apply all their endeavours to the purposes designed by thy good providence in committing such power to their hands—the temporal and spiritual benefit of the nations intrusted to their care.

It is thy blessing, O Lord, that preserveth and thine arm that overcometh in the day of battle. We ascribe all the glory to thee ; and we give thanks for thy great mercies bestowed upon us the sinful children of men. Graciously hear us, O God, and have mercy on us, for the Lord Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING FOR THE REMOVAL
OF PESTILENCE.

Almighty and merciful God, by whose providence the whole world is governed and preserved, we humbly acknowledge that all the punishments which are threatened in thy law might most justly have fallen upon us by reason of our manifold transgressions, and yet thou hast not dealt with us as our iniquities have deserved.

We give thee thanks, O Lord, that thou hast been graciously pleased to assuage the fearful disease with which many places in this kingdom have been visited. We thank thee for thy providential care over us, and we pray that thou wouldst entirely withdraw from our land this grievous sickness.

O Lord, enable us to remember the anguish of our souls when our trouble was upon us, and the resolutions of repentance and newness of life which we then offered up to thee, and let us not return to vanity ; but, oh, give us grace to pay our vows every day to thee. . May the voice of gladness and health be restored to all our dwellings, and may we have faith to live, not unto ourselves, but to Jesus Christ, who is our only Saviour and deliverer. Thou art the God of our salvation, our present help in time of trouble. May we, O Lord, be pardoned and accepted, through Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Mediator. Amen.

PRAYER FOR PUBLIC THANKSGIVING FOR THE REMOVAL OF
DEARTH OR FAMINE.

Almighty and everlasting God, who dost govern all things in heaven and in earth, accept, we beseech thee, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and receive our prayers which we offer up unto thee this day on behalf

of the kingdom and people of this land. We acknowledge, O Lord, that thou hast multiplied on us blessings which thou mightest most justly have withheld. We acknowledge that it is not because of works of righteousness which we have done, but of thy great mercy, that we are permitted to come before thee with the voice of thanksgiving, and that instead of humbling us for our offences, thou hast given us cause to thank thee for thine abundant goodness. Thou preservest all thy creatures, and suppliest the wants of every living thing.

Thou hast given us a plenteous harvest, and art filling our hearts with food and gladness. How great is thy goodness and how great is thy bounty ! Give us grace, we humbly beseech thee, that while we receive thy bounty with thankfulness, we may regard the blessing bestowed on us as a call to repentance, and turn from the evil of our ways. Remove from amongst us all causes of strife and contention ; put an end to our unhappy divisions ; and grant that all conditions of men, impressed with the fear of thy judgments, and trusting in thy fatherly care, may faithfully serve thee, in loyalty to their Sovereign, in obedience to the laws, in kindly affection one to another, and in dutiful resignation to thy will.

Give us the inheritance which fadeth not away, the fruit which is ever yielded by the tree of life.

Pardon in thy mercy all our sins, keep us henceforth from sinning ; and grant us, in the end, the salvation which thou hast provided for thy people, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Psalm xli. 8-11 ; Paraphrase xxiii. 12-15 ; Psalm cxxii. 6-8 ; Paraphrase xviii. 4-7 ; Psalm xcvi. 1-4 ; Psalm ix. 9-12 ; Psalm cvi. 40 ; Psalm lxxvi. 5 ; Psalm cxxxvi. 21 ; Psalm cxxxvii. 4 ; Psalm cii. 13-16 ; Psalm ciii. 6 ; Psalm lxxxvi. 6.

DIRECTIONS FOR CLERGYMEN

WHEN ENTERING ON THE

DUTIES OF THEIR OFFICE.

It cannot be too deeply impressed on ministers when entering on the duties of a parish, that they should be circumspect in all their conduct. How momentous their duty! How responsible their situation! It is necessary, then, that you should have a special regard to yourselves, lest you be destitute of that saving grace of God which you offer to others, and be strangers to the effectual working of that gospel which you preach; and lest, while you proclaim to the world the necessity of a Saviour, your own hearts should neglect him, and you should come short of an interest in him and his saving benefits. You should have a regard to yourselves, lest you perish while you call upon others to beware of perishing; and lest you famish yourselves while you prepare food for them. It is a fearful thing to be an unsanctified professor, but more so to be an unsanctified preacher. Your work cannot succeed unless your heart be in it, and you cannot be in earnest in prosecuting it unless you be im-

pressed with its momentous nature. It is necessary that you should watch over your own hearts ; keep out lusts and passions, and worldly inclinations ; keep up the life of faith, and love, and zeal ; be much at home, and be much with God ; above all, be much in secret prayer and meditation. You should have regard to yourselves, lest your example contradict your doctrine, and lest you lay such stumblingblocks before the blind as may be the occasion of their ruin ; lest you unsay with your lives what you say with your tongues, and be the greatest obstacles of the success of your own labours. Let your lives condemn sin, and persuade men to duty. There are no virtues wherein your example will do more, at least, to lesson man's prejudice, than humility and meekness, and self-denial. Forgive injuries, and "be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Be attentive to the poor of your flock. You should abound in works of charity and benevolence. Go to the poor and see what they want, and shew your compassion at once to their soul and body. You are not only called upon to exercise a ministry of beneficence, but also to promote and entertain a spirit of beneficence. In order to do this, you must not only give an example of beneficence, but you must urge and train to the same all your parishioners, without distinction. You must "bear one another's burdens."

It is no less necessary that you should know every one belonging to your charge ; for how can you take heed to them if you do not know them ? You must labour to be acquainted not only with the persons but the state of all your people, with their inclinations and conversations. Visits such as these must have many advantages. They enable the minister to gain an accurate knowledge of the families in his parish. They confirm and establish

amicable relations. They present opportunities for influencing individuals. The eternal welfare of the members of your parish is that which especially demands your consideration. Your work must be carried on under a deep sense of your own insufficiency, and of your entire dependence upon Christ. You must go for light, and life, and strength, to him who sends you on the work. Your success can only come from him.

Of all the gifts of God to man on earth, time is the most important, and yet the least esteemed. It involves the very being of man, and is the very sheet on which his life, his moral history, is written. Like other gifts, it is so ordained, that it shall be valuable in proportion as it is improved; and the foundation of all solid improvement rests on the employment of the present moment. Never leave the mind to become inactive or listless, for, by doing so, it gradually loses its spring, and there is danger of becoming melancholy, or fretful, or habitually indolent. Regulate time, so as to apportion it properly to the various purposes and duties of life. Never procrastinate or delay the duty which ought to be performed to-day till to-morrow. Gain as much time as possible. Keep constantly in view the great purpose of life, and the uncertainty how soon it may terminate. Do not give up an undue portion of time to sleep. You may lose much time without gaining a proportionate amount of repose. You may gain both time and rest by a judicious combination of different occupations one with another. You may gain time and rest by knowing how to guard against importunity and indiscretion. You should introduce into your life as much regularity as it will admit of; always, however, being ready to sacrifice regularity to charity.

It is, moreover, necessary that you keep a strict watch

over yourself in your social relations. Your conduct should, at all times, correspond to your profession. It is difficult for you, as a Christian, to be acceptable to every one; but it is possible for you to render yourself "approved" before every one. Like Paul, you may say to the world, "We are made manifest unto God, and I trust, also, are made manifest in your conscience." The condemnation of the world for your acts of fidelity is never a disgrace, will never expose you to a loss of respect; while all worldly compliance and concession enfeebles your ministry in every respect, and brings you into disrepute.

There is nothing that tends to injure the character and usefulness of a minister so much as the contracting of debts without the means of discharging them. "Owe no man anything," is a duty that ought to be carefully and strictly adhered to. Prudence, honesty, and punctuality, should mark all your transactions, and regulate all your expenses and the payment of your debts.

As to marriage. The minister's wife is necessarily either an obstacle or an assistance to him: she cannot be neither. This imposes upon him the duty of remembering his ministry in the choice of such a companion. In a judiciously-formed union, and in a family life, there is an example presented to his parish and to the world; and if the minister's wife is what she ought to be, the minister will find, also, useful co-operation.

If only one thing should influence his selection, should it not be the education of his children, which in a great measure depends on the mother? The minister cannot at the same time educate his children and his parish.

Should she share his sentiments, he has a lasting and ever-present consolation, a double strength, and generally an excellent adviser. It is impossible but that a pious

wife should become, for the minister, with special reference to his ministry, "a help meet" for him.

Consider the services which she may render to him,—with the poor, sick, schools, &c. She will be the natural confidant of the women of his congregation; her counsel will be more readily listened to in certain cases. She may supply important information to her husband.

In regard to family worship. The minister's house ought to furnish an example and a model of this.

As to the government of the house, it is necessary that this should be specially attended to, that the order and regularity prevailing there should be a pattern for all. To attain this, more care ought to be taken in the choice of servants than in any other house. Not only should the minister have persons who are suitable so far as the services which he expects from them are concerned, but persons of good reputation, and disposed to enter into the spirit of his house.

These, then, are some of the directions necessary to ministers when entering on the duties of their office. May they seek to be guided in all that they do, and in every relation of life, by that wisdom which cometh from above.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE MODE OF VISITING THE SICK.

To administer counsel and comfort to the sick is certainly one of the most important parochial duties which a clergyman has to perform ; and the dereliction of it would argue a grievous want of spiritual interest, would be neglecting a valuable opportunity of edifying and confirming the true believer, and of converting a sinner from the error of his way.

Visiting the sick is a very difficult part of your work, and requires preparation in the performance of it. It may usually be proper to commence your address to the patient by some conversation of a general kind ; as by inquiring into the nature, and origin, and period of his sickness ; into his circumstances ; into the state of his family ; into the means which have been employed for his relief ; thence you may proceed to observe upon the wise and merciful dispensations of providence, and upon the gracious design for which afflictions are sent,—as a chastisement for his offences ; as a trial of his faith ; and to afford him an opportunity of reflection, and repentance, and amendment of life ; and to lead him “ to work out

his salvation." You may then examine into the habits and character of the person,—his belief ; his conduct ; his use of the Holy Scriptures ; his attendance on the divine ordinances ; his worship of God, public and private,—and thus you may be led by degrees to enlarge upon all the doctrines and duties of the gospel ; to press them home upon his conscience, and to urge them as the indispensable rules of life ; entreating him, moreover, with especial earnestness, to meditate diligently on the teaching and admonition which he has received, and to pray without ceasing for its improvement ; affectionately and solemnly warning him, that however beneficial your ministerial services may be, the great work of salvation must be done by himself, through the aid and blessing of Almighty God.

Specially inquire what his hopes are, and on what foundation they are built. Ask him such questions as these :—Has sin ever been your grief and burden ? What have you done to get rid of it ? In what view has Christ appeared to you ? What are your views of the covenant of grace ? Have you kept up secret prayer ? Have you felt the power of Scripture upon your heart ? Have you been concerned to give your thoughts and affections to God, as well as your external actions ? Have you felt a struggle with the temptations of Satan, and the corruptions of your own heart ? Have you inquired after the remedies of the particular distempers of your own mind ? And, so far as you have understood them, have you endeavoured to use them ?

What you say to the sick should be brief ; and when you pray with the sick, you should be short in your prayers. Few things are more injurious than long prayers at sick-beds. It is no less necessary that in visiting the sick you confine yourselves to the simplest views of Scripture

truth, and that these views should be embodied in some select texts of Scripture.

With regard to individual cases, we may observe, that the characters and circumstances of men are so infinitely varied, that it is impossible to lay down any specific rules which shall be strictly applicable; no two cases are exactly alike. A few suggestions, however, may perhaps be serviceable.

When the sick person has led a Christian life, your business will be to administer consolation and solve his doubts. You must remind him of the experience of others. You must direct him to look back to the goodness of God to him, and the sensible experience he has had of the Divine love and presence. You must desire him to think of what God has done for his soul. You must open the inexhaustible stores of the Divine mercy in the gospel—insist on the mighty efficacy of the Redeemer's blood—the genuine marks of a true faith and sincere repentance; and endeavour to affect his mind with a lively apprehension of the heavenly glory to which he will very shortly be received.

In the case of an habitual impenitent sinner, who professes a belief in the gospel, you should endeavour to awaken in him a sense of his awful situation, and to impress him with a conviction of that Divine mercy which he has abused; adducing some of the more striking instances of the love of God—in the redemption of fallen man—in sending his beloved Son to take upon him our nature, and to die, “the just for the unjust”—in giving his Holy Spirit to all who pray for it, that they may be enabled effectually to embrace the proffered means of salvation—in the wonderful goodness and patience of God, exhibited in his bearing so long with a careless and wilful offender, in bestowing upon him so many undeserved

blessings, and still affording him a gracious opportunity for repentance, still inviting him to turn and be saved. The topics on this head indeed are numberless ; and they present the most powerful arguments that can be urged on the conscience and understanding and affections of the sinner. If an impression is happily produced, exhortations ought carefully to be added, to humiliation, self-abasement, sincerity, gratitude, love, and all the Christian graces and virtues—all represented and recommended as the fruit of earnest and fervent prayer.

In cases of dejection and despondency, it is necessary to enlarge upon the merciful promises and assurances of God's Word. He "has not utterly forgotten to be gracious, nor resolved that he will be favourable no more." "For the Lord will not cast off for ever ; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies." It is comparatively but for a moment that he hides his face from them ; but they may humbly hope, that with great mercies he will gather them, and with everlasting kindness he will have mercy on them. It should be their earnest desire, in such circumstances, to renew their application to the blood of Jesus, through whom the reconciliation between God and their soul has been accomplished. "It is he that is their peace, and by his blood it is that they are made nigh." It is in him, as the beloved of their soul, that God declares "he is well pleased ;" and it is in him that they are "accepted to the glory of his grace."

Let them be further exhorted to make it their immediate and earnest care, that their pride may be humbled, that their watchfulness may be maintained, that their affections to the world may be deadened, and that, on the whole, their fitness for heaven in every respect be increased. These are the designs of their heavenly Father,

and it should be their great concern to co-operate with him.

Where you find vague or enthusiastic notions of religion, you should expatiate on the sober and practical influence of divine truths : and where there seems too much complacency in the review of moral character, or an idea of its meritoriousness, you are required to insist upon the imperfect nature of their best services ; upon the efficacy and necessity of faith, and the sole merit of a Redeemer. All that is required is, that they come unto him, and believe that he is able and willing to save them. All that is asked is, " Believe ye that I am able and willing to do this ? According to thy faith be it unto thee."

To work upon an infidel, it will be requisite to set forth the evidences of religion, natural and revealed ; and you may state, that many of the most hardened atheists who have gloried in the pride and omnipotence of human reason, have been brought to conviction on a sickbed ; have renounced their fatal error, with inexpressible sorrow for their past obduracy, and for the mischief they have occasioned ; and have died, according to their own confessions, as monuments of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

To persons recovered or recovering from sickness, you should continue to visit them ; you should remind them of their former convictions and confessions, urge the vows of God which are upon them ; pray with them, and remind them how eternity appeared to them in their affliction, and what thoughts they had of another world.

Should sickness prove fatal, in that case, it is necessary to visit the surviving relations with a view of leading them to a due improvement of the dispensations of God's providence.

In short, every case must be dealt with according to its

own circumstances, which must be left, under Divine assistance, to the judgment and experience of the minister.

Your employment is truly honourable and important ; and your encouragement, advantage, and assistance, more than equal to the labour it requires. If you be found faithful, you shall not fail of a distinguished recompence from the bountiful hand of that good master.

AN ADDRESS TO THE SICK.

The trials and afflictions of life are numerous,—sickness, disease, and death. Support under them can only be derived from God. “He is a present help in the time of trouble.” True penitents look upon their afflictions as fatherly chastisements. When God afflicts them, he does not forsake them ; and this is their comfort in affliction, that he thinks upon them. God has mercy in store—rich mercy, sure mercy, suitable mercy—for all who seek him in sincerity.

We, however, need some one to plead our cause with God, and effect a reconciliation between us and him. We are all sinners. We have broken the law of God, and we are therefore condemned. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.” “In thy sight shall no man living be justified.” We need, therefore, some one to plead for us, to undertake our cause, and procure our pardon. Jesus Christ alone is both able and willing to undertake for us. He is able ; for he is both God and man. As God, he is omniscient and omnipresent, and he is therefore able to guide and teach us ; almighty, and he is therefore able to bring us

safely through all difficulties and dangers ; infinite in goodness, and therefore he consents to undertake for unworthy and perverse creatures.

As man, he can sympathise with us ; “for he was touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” As man, he was able to make an atonement for our sins by perfectly obeying the law, and by dying for us. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.”

He is willing. He says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.”

Whatever wounds, then, or diseases you experience in your heart and conscience, you should apply to the Lord to heal you, that you may be healed ; to save you, that you may be saved, and that your soul may praise his name. His hands can bind up the troubled conscience, and heal the broken heart ; he can cure the most inveterate diseases of your nature. Applying to him for all the blessings of his grace, exercising yourself to have a conscience void of offence towards God and man, following him patiently and firmly, all things will end for your good. The afflictions of life will be rendered subservient to your spiritual and eternal good.

You are encouraged to call upon God in the day of trouble, to make speedy and importunate application to him who is able, and willing, and ready to help and relieve you. Though it is infinitely dangerous to delay the making of your peace with God till a season of sickness, you are even then permitted and invited to make supplication to him for pardon and salvation. When David was

afflicted he put up the following prayer :—" Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities."

In affliction you should pray for counsel. It is a source of pleasing consolation to be able to say with the Psalmist, "Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." No counsel is so safe in all the circumstances of your life as that which the Lord giveth you in his Word. "The counsel of the Lord," saith the Psalmist, "standeth for ever; the thought of his heart to all generations."

You should pray for Divine support in your afflictions. He hath promised to help us,—“I, the Lord thy God, will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee.” He hath promised to be with us, and to support us, when the waves of affliction threaten our destruction,—“When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

When you are labouring under any kind of affliction, it is lawful to pray to God for deliverance from it. But when you pray for deliverance, you must pray with resignation to the wise disposals of God. The time must be left to him who knows best how long it may be necessary to continue an affliction, or when it is for your greatest good, and his glory to remove it. All prayers for deliverance from affliction should always be expressed in humble and submissive language; you should use the very words, and pray with the acquiescence of, your blessed Saviour, saying, “O my Father, if this cup pass not away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.”

You should pray for a sanctified use of affliction. In

all his dispensations towards you, God intends your good. "My son," says he, "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons ; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? The Lord chasteneth us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

These verses of Scripture represent the gracious designs of God in afflicting you. He means to awaken you to reflection, to humble you, and to bring you to repentance and reformation. But if those salutary ends be frustrated by you, how alarming is your situation ! It is a grievous thing to suffer, and not to be benefited by suffering. If your afflictions have not a softening influence upon you, they render the heart harder and more unimpressive. When affliction is sanctified to you, it is medicinal to the soul ; it promotes your good, the good of others, and the glory of God. "Before I was afflicted," says the Psalmist, "I went astray ; but now I have kept thy word."

You are powerfully encouraged to pray in the time of affliction by the example of wise and good men in the days of old. "In my distress," says David, "I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God, and he did hear my voice out of his temple, and my cry did enter into his ears. The troubles of my heart are enlarged : oh, bring thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction, and my pain, and forgive all my sins." "Do not condemn me," says Job ; "shew me wherefore thou contendest with me. Thou hast granted me life and favour, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit."

Whatever you want, seek it from God through faith in Christ. The faith which trusts in Christ for salvation,

trusts in him for every other blessing ; and for whatever it solicits from God, it depends on the mediation of his Son. You must live by the faith of the Son of God, and die in the faith. In all your duties you must look to him for aid, regard him as your pattern, and rely on him for acceptance in all the changing scenes of life. You must rest in the constancy of his mercy, and when you walk through the dark valley, you must lean on his staff, "Walk in his light, and wait for his salvation."

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK.

PRAYER I.

O Lord, thou art the God of all grace and consolation. Those who call on thee in the time of trouble, thou hearest ; and thou sendest them help from thy sanctuary to support and comfort them in the evil hour.

We are unworthy to speak unto thee, the high and holy One, before whom iniquity cannot dwell ; and yet, in thy grace, thou hast called and invited us to draw near to thee, and hast often inclined thine ear to the voice of our supplications, and granted us an answer in peace. Draw us to thyself in the acts of devotion, and bless our souls with those consolations which can only flow from thee, the Fountain of living waters.

We come before thee, O Lord, trusting in thy mercy, through the atoning blood of Christ, seeking sanctification by the power of the Holy Ghost. Oh, grant that the mercy of thee, our God, may soften our hard hearts, and constrain us to love thee, who hast first loved us.

O Lord, do thou in mercy forgive all our past sins, and

work in us true repentance. Enrich us with all spiritual blessings in Christ.

Do thou, O Lord, be present with us in every season of distress; and do thou comfort and encourage us under every trial of our lot. Be thou our refuge in every time of trouble; and enable us to flee away from our anxieties and sorrows, to lay down the burden of our souls before thee, and be at rest in God our Saviour.

Look in mercy, O Lord, upon thy servant, whom thou hast seen meet to lay on a bed of sickness. Do thou hear his cry; relieve his wants; and sanctify to him the chastening dispensations of thine all-wise and merciful providence.

We pray, O most merciful Father, that this affliction may be removed; that he may be relieved from the distress and the pain under which he now suffers; that the means which are used or may be used for his recovery may prove effectual; that his health may be restored and his life prolonged; that he may be a blessing and a comfort to his family, (or parents, or whatever the circumstances may be;) and that he may praise thee in the land of the living.

If thou art pleased in thy good providence to spare his life and restore his health, may he come out of the furnace of affliction as gold doubly refined, and may grace be given him to enable him henceforth to walk before thee in newness of life. But, O Lord, if thou hast otherwise determined concerning him, we pray that thou wouldst prepare him for whatever thou art preparing for him. Grant that at whatever time thou mayest be pleased to call him out of this world, he may be ready to resign his soul into thy hand with joy, and not with grief.

We know, O Lord, that the only sting of death is sin. and that Christ has removed this for all who believe in

him. May he, therefore, having obtained grace to believe, be enabled to adopt the triumphant song, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

O most gracious God, we would desire to intercede with thee in behalf of all the members of this family who are also the sharers in this affliction. May they be supported by thy strength, and comforted with the consolations of thy Spirit. May they view thy hand in all that befalls them, and may they not murmur nor repine at thy righteous dispensations. May they therefore, O Lord, have the sanctified use of all their afflictions; and may they prove to them by thy blessing the means of weaning them from the world, and of teaching them to set their affections on things above, and not upon things on earth.

May God grant to all of us his blessing; may he make us monuments of his mercy, and enable us to glorify his name. And all that we would ask is for Christ's sake. Amen.

PRAYER II.

O Almighty God and Father, whose power no creature is able to resist, and in whose hand are all the issues of life and death; look down, we beseech thee, from heaven, thy dwelling-place, upon us thy unworthy creatures, and enable us to trust in thee. Do thou humble us before thee, and give us grace to approach thy footstool in true repentance, faith, and prayer, and to make an unfeigned surrender of ourselves to thee to be saved in the way of thine own appointment. It is entirely of thy mercy in Christ Jesus that we are not consumed, because thy compassions fail not.

We thank thee, O Lord, for everything which thou hast mercifully provided to remove pain, to rescue us from immediate death, to give us length of days, and comfort to ourselves and those to whom we are dear. Blessed be God for all those medicinal virtues which thou hast taught man to discover and apply for the relief of them that suffer pain or sickness. How manifold are the instances of thy goodness ! How numerous are the signs of thy compassion !

Our days, O Lord, are subject to many infirmities, liable to many diseases, and obnoxious to many wants. But we are sensible that these evils are only the consequences of our own apostasy. Thou at first madest man upright after thine own image, and endued him with an immortal spirit ; but, alas ! sin has entered into the world, and death by sin, so death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned.

But we rejoice, O Lord, that our prospects are not confined to this short, and this uncertain state of existence, but that through Jesus Christ, the Son of thy love, thou hast extended our views beyond the grave, and hast opened up unto us the cheering prospects of a glorious immortality. We bless thee, O Lord, that Jesus Christ was made sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him ; and that forasmuch as we are partakers of flesh and blood he also took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

Having, then, the offer of salvation through Jesus Christ, and knowing the manner in which this salvation is to be obtained, may we, O Lord, be diligent in the use of those means and faithful in the discharge of those duties which are required of us in the gospel of Christ.

When we enjoy health, may we study thy holy precepts; may we inform ourselves of those things which belong to our everlasting peace, and may we be enabled in the strength of thy grace to believe and to act in such a manner as that we may be allowed to indulge the hope of being made partakers of the benefits of Christ's death. Grant, O Lord, that when days of darkness, of suffering, and affliction shall approach, as approach they must sooner or later to all of us, we may be enabled to bear them with fortitude and resignation, considering all our trials and afflictions in this world only as the chastisements of a kind and merciful Father, who afflicteth not willingly, neither hath delight in grieving the children of men.

We adore thee, O Lord, that in our distresses we are not only permitted, but commanded to make known our requests to thee by prayer and supplication. We would now, O Lord, avail ourselves of this privilege in behalf of this thy servant whom, in the course of thy providence, and for wise purposes which are known unto thee, thou hast been pleased to visit with severe affliction.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, and hear us, and for thy truth and for thy mercy's sake send us an answer in peace. Give thy servant to know that affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground, but that all is permitted or sent of God for wise purposes, for our humiliation or for our spiritual improvement. Whatever may be the cause or whatever may be the issue of the present visitation, may this person have reason to say with thy servant David of old, It is good for me that I have been afflicted.

Thou, O Lord, not only forgivest all our iniquities, but thou also healest all our diseases. Speak the word only, and thy servant shall be healed. We know that thou waitest to be gracious, and thou hast for our encourage-

ment said, In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, and in faithfulness and for thy profit have chastened thee as for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee. May we have reason to hope that such is thy manner of acting at present. If it be consistent with thy glory, and with the eternal welfare of thy servant, may his life at this time be spared, and his soul delivered from the power of the grave.

But, O Lord, when we have thus prayed, enable us, and enable thy servant, to be entirely resigned to thy will, whether it shall be for life or for death. This only we plead, and we would ask in faith, that thou wouldst not separate between the soul and the body until his soul shall be delivered by thy grace and power, through Jesus Christ, from the guilt and dominion of sin. To him to live, while he lives may it indeed be Christ, and then to die, may it be everlasting gain. Whether he lives may he live unto the Lord, or whether he dies may he die unto the Lord ; living or dying may he be the Lord's.

We pray, O Lord, that thou wouldst sanctify unto all of us the dispensations of thy providence. When we see others visited with affliction may we be reminded of our guilt, which is the cause of our suffering, and may we be led to repentance and amendment of life. May we remember that what is their case may very soon be our own ; that we hold our lives by a very uncertain tenure ; that we know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. To-day is our living day, but to-morrow may be our dying. May we, therefore, be all waiting in readiness for death, having our loins girded about, and our lights burning, and we ourselves like unto men who wait for the coming of their Lord.

May this world, O Lord, with its vain pleasures and

deceitful riches, sink in our estimation. May it be the study of our lives to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, so that where our treasures are there our hearts may also be.

Hear us, O Lord, in mercy, forgive our sins, and accept of us for Christ's sake. Amen.

SERVICE AT THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

THE following form may be varied according to the particular circumstances of the family bereaved.

The minister may recite the following

INTRODUCTORY SENTENCES.

By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, because that all have sinned.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed ; because his compassions fail not. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame ; he remembereth that we are dust.

Though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly the children of men.

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord Jesus : he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live ; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.

The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord.

When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities ; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Portions of Scripture to be read :—1 Cor. xv. 20-58 ; 1 Thess. iv. 13-18.

PRAYER I.

O eternal and unchangeable Lord God, who art the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Glorious are thy works, deep thy counsels, marvellous thy dispensations in nature, in providence, in grace. To thy all-seeing eye, everything in heaven and on earth is laid open, the relations of every event, and the influence of every measure ; in thy mind there can be no perplexity, and in thy plans there can be no failure. Thy throne is over all, and power, and dominion are thine.

Amidst the perplexities of life, may we look to thee, O God, who can guide us through the thickest darkness, and who can make a way in the wilderness, and a path in the desert. We are but the creatures of yesterday, whose foundation is in the dust ; but we look up to thee with confidence as the source of our existence, the author of our enjoyments, and the God to whom we owe all our hopes of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

Teach us the value of our souls, and of the salvation which has been wrought for them by Christ Jesus. Our only refuge is in thy promised mercy in Christ. We cast ourselves on that mercy. May we fix our hopes on our Saviour's cross ; may we confess our guilt, and may the blood of Christ cleanse us from all sin.

Thou hast laid thy chastening hand upon us. Remember mercy in the midst of judgment, and lay not upon us more than we are made able to bear. O Lord, thou art our salvation ; forsake us not in our time of need. It becomes us to say, in whatever way we are tried, we know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted us.

We pray, O God, that we may be led to view and to acknowledge thy hand in all the dispensations of thy providence ; that we may glorify thee for thy goodness ; that we may acknowledge the kindness of thy chastisements ; and that we may profit by every event which befalls us.

May we remember that the various circumstances of our lot are fixed by thee. And since man's days are determined, and the number of his months is with thee, and thou hast appointed him bounds which he cannot pass, let us resign our friends to thee, O Lord, when thou claimest them, and our own life when thou requirest it, without a murmur, and let the whole of life be a preparation for its close.

We pray, O Lord, that by all that is happening to us in this state of trial and discipline in which we are placed, we may be more deeply impressed than ever with the vain and transitory nature of all earthly things. We are impressively called upon by the instance of mortality with which thou hast been pleased to afflict this family to consider how frail we are, to humble ourselves under thy mighty hand, and to submit to thy dispensations with patience and resignation. Let each of us be duly affected upon so afflicting an occasion, resigning ourselves wholly to thy will and pleasure. And we pray, especially, that thou wouldst visit in mercy and with the consolations of thy Holy Spirit those in this house of mourning who are involved in deep distress by the death of one with whom

they were so closely connected. Thou hast in thy mysterious providence removed from this dwelling one who was a beloved wife, and a dutiful and an affectionate mother; but we have good ground to believe that she has passed from this world of sorrow and suffering to her home in the land of promise. To whom can the bereaved husband and the sorrowing and disconsolate children go but unto thee, who art a refuge to the distressed, and a present help in every time of need? Subdue their grief, that they may only sorrow after a godly sort, and that the peace of thee their God may descend in mercy and rest upon their spirits. Let not their hearts rebel against thy will in this trying dispensation. Teach them to seek all their happiness in thee, in studying thy will, and doing thy work. Make them to account the loss of all things here below, to be made up in thy love. May Christ be their guide and support. May the shortness and uncertainty of this life, and the eternity of that which is to come, cause us to live in constant preparation for the change, living every day as if it were our last. Hear us, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

PRAYER II.

O Lord, thou art a Father and a friend to all who draw near unto thee for help and comfort. We put our trust in thee, and we are confident that thou wilt never leave us nor forsake us. Enable us to cast our burden upon Christ, who is all-sufficient for us.

Look down with compassion on this afflicted family deprived of its head, even of one who was a kind husband and a tender and compassionate father.

May the well-grounded hope that he, whose untimely loss they now deplore, is removed for ever beyond the

reach of pain and suffering, and rejoicing in the presence of God, lead them with Christian resignation to say, "The will of the Lord be done : the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord."

May they put their trust in thee, for thou art their only hope. Enable them to moderate their grief. May this thy gracious promise, O Lord, be sufficient to support them,—“Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive ; and let thy widows trust in me.”

May they look to thee for wisdom to direct them, grace and strength to sanctify and support them, and may they wait in faith and patience the issue of all thy dealings towards them.

Do thou prepare us all to meet thee, our God. However sudden the summons may be, may it be a welcome one. May our lamps burn brighter amidst the darkness and the chill of death. May the resurrection of Christ give us new animation every day in his service, and may it support our hearts in every scene of mortality. And we pray, that when those who cling to us in every changing scene shall leave us to the solitude and power of the grave, we may have a life hid with Christ in God, a friend to whom our dust shall be a care, and a deliverer who shall redeem us from the land of darkness.

Incline thine ear, O Lord, to our requests, and accept of us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

Portions of Scripture to be read.—*Psalms xxxix., xc. ; 2 Samuel xii. 22, 23.*

PRAYER III.

O Lord God Almighty, holy and just art thou, and none can question thy doings, in heaven above, or in

earth beneath. Thou art the Judge of all the earth, and doest right in all things.

While creatures change, thou art the same ; and while our days are quickly passing away, with thee is no variableness or shadow of turning.

O Lord, impress our hearts deeply with a sense of the shortness and the uncertainty of our continuance in this world. Teach us ever to bear in mind that here we are only pilgrims and strangers ; that the place which now knows us shall in a short time know us no more ; that nothing in the future is to us certain but death, for, alas ! sin hath entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death has passed upon all men, for all have sinned. Behold, O God, our days are as an handbreadth, and our age is as nothing before thee. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

We rejoice, however, O Lord, that life and immortality have been brought to light by the gospel ; that through Jesus Christ thou hast extended our views beyond the grave ; that through him thou hast taught us that this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and that this mortal shall put on immortality ; that he hath declared himself to be the resurrection and the life ; and that he that believeth on him, though he were dead yet shall he live ; that there remaineth a rest for the people of God ; that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus ; that through death he hath destroyed him who hath the power of death.

Make us more and more sensible of our weakness, that we may the more humbly and implicitly rely upon thy divine guidance and blessing. Have compassion on us for the sake of Jesus Christ. We fall down at the foot of his cross and implore forgiveness through him alone.

We earnestly pray, O Lord, for this family in the afflicting and distressing circumstances in which they are placed. They have been bereaved of one of the tenderest and dearest objects of their affection. Thou gavest, and thou hast the right to take away. May the remembrance of the support which thou didst give them on former similarly severe dispensations of thy providence, lead them still to trust in thee, knowing that thou art still the same God, rich in mercy and near to all who call upon thee. May they remember the gracious words of the blessed Jesus when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Help them to bow in meek submission to thy will. Do thou support and comfort them. Sanctify this bereavement to their souls.

Help us to consider that we do not rightly improve thy providences in calling away others, if we prove negligent in preparing to follow them. Give us that habitual and actual readiness which are so absolutely necessary. Lead us through this world in safety and peace. Sustain our souls at the hour of death; and after death receive us into glory. Grant, we beseech thee, O most merciful Father, these our petitions, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

THE END.

